3
LEVEL

# Tafsir

## Quranic Exegesis

Obeikan Education

ENGLISH EDITION

# Tafsir

## Quranic Exegesis

### Level 3

Prepared by Zad Group

ⓒ مجموعة زاد للنشر، 1445هـ
Zadgroup, team
Tafsir (3). / Zadgroup, team - ط1 - الرياض، 1445
100 صفحة، 21*27.5سم
رقم الإيداع: 1445/20286
ردمك: 978-603-8234-60-0

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**First Edition**
**1446 - 2024**

**Publishing**

**KSA - Jeddah**
Al-Shatei, Beutat Business - Office. 16
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P.o. Box: 67622 Riyadh 11517
www.obeikanretail.com

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

# Preface

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and blessings and peace be upon the noblest of the Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, and upon all his family and Companions. To proceed:

Islamic knowledge is one of the most important necessities that the Muslim needs in his life; the entire ummah, in its efforts to rebuild Islamic civilization, is in need of it. Hence the religious texts point out the importance of Islamic knowledge and its bearers. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge - [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise}* [Aal Imran 3:18]. Ash-Shawkani رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ said: What is meant by those of knowledge here is the scholars of the Quran and Sunnah. And Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{and say, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge"}* [Ta-Ha 20:114].

In the hadith it says: **«Whoever follows a path seeking knowledge thereby, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise.»** Narrated by Muslim.

This series of textbooks comes to serve the community, with the aim of conveying Islamic knowledge by various methods and making it readily available to those who seek it. We hope that it will be another source of knowledge for academic programs and that it will be a support and help to those who want to acquire more Islamic knowledge and education, in an effort to achieve the main goal, which is to spread and instill sound Islamic knowledge on a sound academic foundation and in accordance with correct beliefs, based on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, in a modern and easily-understood style. We ask Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ to grant us all beneficial knowledge, enable us to do righteous deeds, guide us and help us to be sincere in our efforts.

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The Zad
Academy Series

Tafsir
Quranic Exegesis
Level 3

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# UNIT 1

﴿إِذَا ٱلسَّمَآءُ ٱنشَقَّتۡ ١ وَأَذِنَتۡ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتۡ ٢ وَإِذَا ٱلۡأَرۡضُ مُدَّتۡ
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ٱلۡإِنسَٰنُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدۡحٗا فَمُلَٰقِيهِ ٦ فَأَمَّا مَنۡ أُوتِيَ
كِتَٰبَهُۥ بِيَمِينِهِۦ ٧ فَسَوۡفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابٗا يَسِيرٗا ٨ وَيَنقَلِبُ إِلَىٰٓ
أَهۡلِهِۦ مَسۡرُورٗا ٩ وَأَمَّا مَنۡ أُوتِيَ كِتَٰبَهُۥ وَرَآءَ ظَهۡرِهِۦ ١٠ فَسَوۡفَ يَدۡعُواْ
ثُبُورٗا ١١ وَيَصۡلَىٰ سَعِيرًا ١٢ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ فِيٓ أَهۡلِهِۦ مَسۡرُورًا ١٣ إِنَّهُۥ ظَنَّ
أَن لَّن يَحُورَ ١٤ بَلَىٰٓ إِنَّ رَبَّهُۥ كَانَ بِهِۦ بَصِيرٗا ١٥﴾

**Allah** عَزَّوَجَلَّ **says:** *{When the sky has split [open] And has responded to its Lord and was obligated [to do so] And when the earth has been flattened out And has cast out that within it and relinquished [it] And has responded to its Lord and was obligated [to do so] – O mankind, indeed you are laboring toward your Lord with [great] exertion and will meet Him. Then as for he who is given his record in his right hand, He will be judged with an easy account And return to his people in happiness. But as for he who is given his record behind his back, He will cry out for destruction And [enter to] burn in a Blaze. Indeed, he had [once] been among his people in happiness; Indeed, he had thought he would never return [to Allah]. But yes! Indeed, his Lord was ever of him, Seeing}* [al-Inshiqaq 84:1-15].

## What has been narrated concerning it:

It was narrated that Abu Rafi said: I prayed Isha with Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه and he recited: {When the sky has split [open] ...} and prostrated [during the recitation of this surah]. I asked him about that, and he said: I prostrated behind Abu'l-Qasim صلى الله عليه وسلم and I shall continue to prostrate when reciting this surah until I meet him again. Agreed upon.

And it was narrated that Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه said: We prostrated with the Messenger of Allah during the recitation of {When the sky has split [open]} [al-Inshiqaq] and {Recite in the name of your Lord who created} [al-Alaq]. Narrated by Muslim.

## Commentary

*{When the sky has split [open]}* that is, when the sky develops cracks and begins to break up, and becomes gateways. This is like the verses in which Allah عز وجل says: *{And the heaven will split [open], for that Day it is infirm}* [al-Haqqah 69:16].

*{And [mention] the Day when the heaven will split open with [emerging] clouds, and the angels will be sent down in successive descent}* [al-Furqan 25:25].

*{And has responded to its Lord and was obligated [to do so]}* that is, it listened to its Lord's command to split open and obeyed Him, and it was obligated to obey, because the One Who commanded it was Allah, its Creator عز وجل.

**In verse 2,** {Wa adhinat li rabbiha wa huqqat (And has responded to its Lord and was obligated [to do so])}, the word adhinat, translated here as responded, comes from a root meaning to listen. This verb also appears in the hadith in which the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: **«Allah does not listen [ma adhina] to anything as He listens to a Prophet reciting the Quran in a melodious voice.»** Agreed upon.

*{And when the earth has been flattened out}* that is, it has been spread out and smoothed out, and Allah عز وجل has flattened it out so that it has become vast and able to accommodate the people of the standing [on the Day of Resurrection], despite their huge numbers; and everything on it, such as mountains and so on, has been removed.

## Commentary

*{And has cast out that within it and relinquished [it]}* that is, it has cast out what it contains of the dead, buried treasure and other things, onto its surface, and emptied itself of them, so that there will be nothing left inside the earth. This is like the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And the earth discharges its burdens}* [az-Zalzalah 99:2].

*{And has responded to its Lord and was obligated [to do so]}* – that is, it listened to its Lord and obeyed Him.

*{O mankind, indeed you are laboring toward your Lord with [great] exertion and will meet Him}* that is, you are striving hard in your journey to your Lord, in earnest and facing hardship; you are striving in an effort that will bring you to your Lord. This is like the verses in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And that to your Lord is the finality}* [an-Najm 53:42] and *{Indeed, to Us is their return}* [al-Ghashiyah 88:25].

*{and will meet Him}* that is, you will meet your Lord, and you have no way to avoid meeting Him; or you will meet the requital of your deeds, whether good or bad.

The word translated here as labouring (kadh) refers to a person's working and striving for good or for evil, until that has an impact on him.

*{Then as for he who is given his record in his right hand}* that is, the one who is given the record of his deeds in his right hand.

*{He will be judged with an easy account}* that is, his sins will be shown to him, then he will be pardoned for them.

Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated that Aisha رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said: The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«No one will be brought to account but he will be doomed.»** I said: Doesn't Allah say, *{Then as for he who is given his record in his right hand, he will be judged with an easy account}*? He said: **«That is not the bringing to account; rather that is like showing him his record. But whoever is given a thorough reckoning will be doomed.»**

*{And return to his people}* that is, his family in Paradise, both hur al-een and humans.

*{in happiness}* because he has been saved from punishment, and because he is happy with what he has received of blessing and honour.

## Commentary

*{But as for he who is given his record behind his back}* – his right hand will be tied to his neck, and his left hand will be caused to be behind his back, so he will be given his record in his left hand, behind his back, as an indication that he turned his back on the Book of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and he did not care about it or pay any attention to it, and he did not see anything wrong with going against it. So he will be given a punishment that will match his deed.

*{He will cry out for destruction}* that is, he will cry out for destruction, lamenting his doom when he sees his record, or he will utter words of regret and sorrow. This is like the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{they will cry out thereupon for destruction}* [al-Furqan 25:13].

*{And [enter to] burn in a Blaze}* that is, he will be admitted to the Fire and burn in it. This is like the verse: *{[He] who will [enter and] burn in the greatest Fire}* [al-A'la 87:12].

*{Indeed, he had [once] been among his people in happiness}* that is, in this world, and the resurrection never crossed his mind, but he was wrong to behave like that.

*{Indeed, he had thought he would never return [to Allah]}* that is, he thought that he would never be brought back to life and resurrected, then be brought to account, then either rewarded or punished.

The word al-hawr, translated here as return, also appears in the hadith in which the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Allahumma inni a'oodhu bika min al-hawri ba'd al-kawr (O Allah, I seek refuge with You from loss after plenty).»** Narrated by Muslim.

That is: from declining after attaining perfection.

### The poet Labeed said:

Man is nothing but a brilliant shooting star — That turns to ashes (yahooru ramaadan) after having shone brightly

*{But yes!}* That is, the matter is not as he thought; rather he will be brought back to Us.

*{Indeed, his Lord was ever of him, Seeing}* – before He created him, He knew that he would return to Him, and He knew what was already decreed for him of doom or bliss.

## What we learn from the verses:

### 1

We learn about the record of deeds. Allah has made the giving of the record in the believer's right hand an indication that he is blessed and destined for Paradise, because the right hand is customarily used to handle clean and good things. This is common sense that is instilled in human beings.

### 2

In the verse *{And return to his people in happiness}*, the word order reflects the situation of the one who will have an easy reckoning and how happy he will be, for he will attain victory and salvation after having done righteous deeds in this world. His situation is likened to that of one who travels for the purpose of trade, when he returns home safe and sound having made a profit, because of the similarity in feeling happy at having achieved something, and returning safe and sound and meeting his family.

### 3

The verse *{But yes! Indeed, his Lord was ever of him, Seeing}* is indicative of the wisdom behind resurrecting people in order to requite them for their deeds, for the Lord of people is well acquainted with their situation and sees it clearly. Therefore it would not be wise if the evildoer were to get away with the evil that he committed and the harm that he caused to others, or if the efforts of the righteous to rectify and guide people were to be ignored and go to waste. So Allah has made the life of the Hereafter eternal and has ordained that it should be the realm of requital for what each person sent ahead in his worldly life.

## Activities

1. **Quote three verses from the Quran which refer to the splitting of the sky on the Day of Resurrection.**

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.....

2. **Why will the disbeliever be given his record from behind his back?**

.....

.....

.....

3. **What do you understand from this eloquent Quranic phrase:** *{And return to his people in happiness}*?

.....

.....

.....

﴿فَلَآ أُقۡسِمُ بِٱلشَّفَقِ ١٦ وَٱلَّيۡلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ ١٧ وَٱلۡقَمَرِ إِذَا ٱتَّسَقَ
١٨ لَتَرۡكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَن طَبَقٖ ١٩ فَمَا لَهُمۡ لَا يُؤۡمِنُونَ ٢٠ وَإِذَا قُرِئَ
عَلَيۡهِمُ ٱلۡقُرۡءَانُ لَا يَسۡجُدُونَ ۩ ٢١ بَلِ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ يُكَذِّبُونَ ٢٢
وَٱللَّهُ أَعۡلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ ٢٣ فَبَشِّرۡهُم بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ٢٤ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ لَهُمۡ أَجۡرٌ غَيۡرُ مَمۡنُونِۭ ٢٥﴾

**Allah** عَزَّوَجَلَّ **says:** *{So I swear by the twilight glow And [by] the night and what it envelops And [by] the moon when it becomes full [That] you will surely experience state after state. So what is [the matter] with them [that] they do not believe, And when the Quran is recited to them, they do not prostrate [to Allah]? But those who have disbelieved deny, And Allah is most knowing of what they keep within themselves. So give them tidings of a painful punishment, Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds. For them is a reward uninterrupted}* [al-Inshiqaq 84:16-25].

## Commentary

*{So I swear by the twilight glow}* – some may think that what is meant by the words "Fa laa uqsim (translated here as 'So I swear')" is a negation, but that is not the case. Rather it is an affirmation; the word **laa** here serves to alert and affirm. It is similar to the verses: *{**Laa** uqsimu bi hadha'l-balad (I swear by this city)}* [al-Balad 90:1] and *{**Laa** uqsimu bi yawm il-qiyaamah (I swear by the Day of Resurrection)}* [al-Qiyamah 75:1].

**The word shafaq,** translated here as twilight, is the red afterglow that occurs after sunset.

Al-Wahidi said: This is the view of all the commentators and scholars of Arabic language.

*{And [by] the night and what it envelops}* that is, what it brings together. What is meant is the night and what it brings together of humans and animals that were scattered during the day, because when night comes, every creature goes back to its home.

*{And [by] the moon when it becomes full}* that is, when it gradually increases until it becomes full.

## Commentary

*{[That] you will surely experience state after state}*. This is what is attested to by the oath: you will go through various circumstances and stages, one after another, from the nutfah (sperm drop) to the alaqah (clot of congealed blood), to the mudghah (lump of chewed flesh), to the stage when the soul is breathed into the foetus; then you become an infant, then a child, then you reach the age of discernment, then you become accountable, and so on until you die; then you pass into the realm of the Hereafter.

*{So what is [the matter] with them [that] they do not believe}* that is, what is preventing them from believing, and what will happen to them if they believe in Allah, and His messengers, the Last Day, and what it says in the Quran that it is obligatory to believe in?

*{And when the Quran is recited to them, they do not prostrate [to Allah]}* that is, they do not submit to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. What is meant by prostration here is submission to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, whether one prostrates on the ground or not; rather the heart prostrates and becomes softened and humbled.

*{But those who have disbelieved deny}* that is, they deny the truth after it has become clear. But there is nothing strange in the fact that they do not believe or submit to the Quran, because denial is an inherent part of their nature.

*{And Allah is most knowing of what they keep within themselves}* that is, what they harbour in their hearts and what they intend in secret. Allah knows what they conceal and what they show openly, and He will requite them for their deeds.

*{So give them tidings of a painful punishment}* that is, tell them of a severe and painful punishment.

**Al-bisharah (tidings) is so called** because it has an impact on the skin (bashrah), whether the reaction to the tidings is joy or grief.

*{Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds. For them is a reward uninterrupted}*. This refers to another group whom Allah guided, who accepted the message brought by the messengers, so that they believed and did righteous deeds. For them there will be a reward that will never cease; rather it will be eternal.

## What we learn from the verses:

The words *{[That] you will surely experience state after state}* indicate that there are stages and changes through which a person goes. That includes changes in time and place, and changes in physical and spiritual well-being.

**The first type** of changes has to do with time. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And these days [of varying conditions] We alternate among the people}* [Aal Imran 3:140].

**The second type** of changes has to do with place. A person halts in one place on one day, and halts in another place on the following day, and so on for a third and fourth day, until he reaches the stages of the Hereafter.

**The third type** of changes is physical changes. A person moves from one state to another. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Allah is the one who created you from weakness, then made after weakness strength, then made after strength weakness and white hair. He creates what He wills, and He is the Knowing, the Competent}* [ar-Rum 30:54].

**The fourth type** of changes is changes in the heart (spiritual changes). All the hearts of the children of Adam are held between two of the Fingers of the Most Gracious, and He turns them however He wills.

**A linguistic point:** in the verses *{So give them tidings of a painful punishment, Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds}* [al-Inshiqaq 84:24-25], the exception seen here is what the scholars call istithna munqati, which is an exception where the one that is excluded is not of the same type as the others mentioned before the word illa (except); the one who is excluded here is not the same as those from whom he is excluded. Those who believe and do righteous deeds are not included in the first place among those who are given the tidings of punishment, and they are not of the same type as them, such that they could be excluded. But this expression is a way of drawing attention to what is excluded by this exception.

Some of the scholars quoted the verse *{And when the Quran is recited to them, they do not prostrate [to Allah]}* as proof for the prostration of recitation being obligatory.

However, **the correct view** is that it is not obligatory; rather it is a confirmed Sunnah (Sunnah muakkadah). That is because it is proven in as-Sahih from Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه that he addressed the people one day and recited Surat an-Nahl, and when he reached the verse in which there is a sajdah (prostration), he came down from the minbar and prostrated, then he recited it on the following Friday and came to this verse and did not prostrate, and he said: **«Verily Allah has not made it obligatory for us to prostrate unless we wish to do it.»** That was in the presence of the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم and no one objected to what he said.

## Activities

1. **Quote three verses from the Quran in which the word laa serves to emphasize an oath.**

.....

.....

.....

2. **Explain the meaning of the following words:**

a. **Wasaq (the twilight glow):**

.....

b. **Ittasaqa (it becomes full):**

.....

c. **Tabaqan 'an tabaq (state after state):**

.....

3. **What is the ruling on the prostration of recitation (sajdat at-tilawah)?**

.....

# UNIT 2

**Surat al-Buruj is a Makkan surah (revealed before the Hijrah)**

﴿وَٱلسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ ٱلْبُرُوجِ ۝١ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْمَوْعُودِ ۝٢ وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ ۝٣ قُتِلَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْأُخْدُودِ ۝٤ ٱلنَّارِ ذَاتِ ٱلْوَقُودِ ۝٥ إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ ۝٦ وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ ۝٧ وَمَا نَقَمُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّآ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ ٱلْعَزِيزِ ٱلْحَمِيدِ ۝٨ ٱلَّذِى لَهُۥ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ۝٩﴾

**Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:** *{By the sky containing great stars and [by] the promised Day and [by] the witness and what is witnessed, cursed were the companions of the trench [containing] the fire full of fuel, when they were sitting near it and they, to what they were doing against the believers, were witnesses. And they resented them not except because they believed in Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And Allah, over all things, is Witness}* [al-Buruj 85:1-9].

## What has been narrated concerning it:

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ that the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to recite in Isha prayer, *{By the sky containing great stars}* [Surat al-Buruj] and *{By the sky and the night comer}* [Surat at-Tariq]. Narrated by Imam Ahmad, at-Tirmidhi and an-Nasai; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

## Commentary

*{By the sky containing great stars}*. This is an oath that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ swears by the sky and its great stars. This is like the verse in which He عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Blessed is He Who has placed in the sky great stars}* [al-Furqan 25:61].

**The word buruj,** translated here as great stars, may refer to the phases of the sun and moon. It was also said that this word refers to the big stars and heavenly bodies with regular movements within a perfect order and system, which is indicative of the perfect might and mercy of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

**The related word baraja** means to appear; from this root comes the word tabarruj, which refers to wanton display on the part of a woman. The buruj (great stars) are so called because they are very high and prominent, and are clearly visible.

*{And [by] the promised Day}*. This refers to the Day of Resurrection, according to the consensus of the commentators. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has promised that it will take place and has explained about it in His Book, and He has established evidence, both textual and rational, for it.

*{And [by] the witness and what is witnessed}*. The scholars of Quranic exegesis have given a number of views concerning what is meant by the witness and what is witnessed; these views may all be summed up as meaning that here Allah is swearing by every single witness and every single witnessed thing.

### The witnesses are many, and include the following:

- Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: *{So how [will it be] when We bring from every nation a witness and we bring you, [O Muhammad] against these [people] as a witness?}* [an-Nisa 4:41].
- This ummah will be witnesses over humanity: *{And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people}* [al-Baqarah 2:143].
- On the Day of Resurrection, a person's own limbs and faculties will bear witness concerning him and what he did of good and evil: *{On a Day when their tongues, their hands and their feet will bear witness against them as to what they used to do}* [an-Nur 24:24].
- The angels will bear witness on the Day of Resurrection: *{But Allah bears witness to that which He has revealed to you. He has sent it down with His knowledge, and the angels bear witness [as well]. And sufficient is Allah as Witness}* [an-Nisa 4:166].

**Everyone who bears witness to truth is included in the words** *{And [by] the witness}*.

## Commentary

With regard to ***{and what is witnessed}***, this includes the Day of Arafah, and the Day of Resurrection and what will happen on it of great terrors, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{That is a Day for which the people will be collected, and that is a Day [which will be] witnessed}* [Hud 11:103].

*{Cursed were}* that is, they were doomed and cast out from divine mercy. This is a supplication against them, and shaming and disgracing them, because the phrase indicates both meanings.

*{the companions of the trench}* they were a disbelieving people who burned the believers with fire. They tried to make them recant their religion, but they failed, so they dug a huge trench, like a river, filled it with a large amount of firewood, and burned the believers in it.

**The word ukhdood,** translated here as trench, refers to a large rectangular ditch that is dug in the ground.

*{[containing] the fire full of fuel}* – they lit the intense fire that was full of fuel, namely the firewood with which it was kindled.

*{when they were sitting near it}* that is, these disbelievers were sitting near the fire to torture the believers. This shows how extremely hardhearted they were.

*{and they}* namely the king and his companions who dug the trench.

*{to what they were doing against the believers}* of exposing them to the fire and wanting to make them recant their religion.

*{were witnesses}* that is, they were present and watching.

Thus they were sitting and witnessing what they were doing to the believers. This highlights how terrible they were and how awful that crime was, because they witnessed the torture of the believers and showed them no mercy, and they felt no disgust at that scene.

*{And they resented them not}* that is, they did not criticize them or hate them – this is like the verse *{Say, "O People of the Scripture, do you resent us except [for the fact] that we have believed in Allah and what was revealed to us and what was revealed before…?"}* [al-Ma'idah 5:59].

## Commentary

*{except because they believed in Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy}*. They only resented them for one thing, which was their belief in Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

So this was their crime, that they believed in Allah, the Exalted in Might, the One Who is able to do whatever He wills, the Praiseworthy who is deserving of praise in all circumstances!

*{To whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth}* that is, the Owner of all the heavens and the earth, everything in them and everything between them. This is indicative of the perfect might and power of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

*{And Allah, over all things, is Witness}* that is, nothing escapes Him in any of the heavens or on earth, and nothing is hidden from Him.

## What we learn from the verses:

1. **Starting the surah with an oath makes the listener curious to find out what comes next, and alerts him to the importance of what is attested to in that oath. In addition to that, it draws the listeners' attention to the matters that are attested to.**

2. **The three divine attributes – *{the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy, To Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth}* – are mentioned so as to emphasize that what the disbelievers resented was not something that should be resented; rather it was something for which the believers deserved to be praised, because they believed in a great Lord Who has great attributes which dictate that one should worship Him.**

3. **In the words *{And Allah, over all things, is Witness}* there is a warning to those who dug the trench and others like them, and there is a promise to those who are persecuted for the sake of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.**

## Activities

1. Give the linguistic meaning of the word buruj (translated here as great stars).

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2. Mention three types of witnesses, and the evidence for them, from the Book of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

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3. In these verses there is an indication of the extreme tyranny of these criminals who burned the people of the trench. Explain that from these verses.

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4. During the era of weakness that the Muslim ummah is going through, what can the weak and oppressed learn from the story of the people of the trench?

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﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ فَتَنُوا۟ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا۟ فَلَهُمْ
عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ ٱلْحَرِيقِ ﴿١٠﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟
ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّٰتٌ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْفَوْزُ ٱلْكَبِيرُ
﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ يُبْدِئُ وَيُعِيدُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَهُوَ ٱلْغَفُورُ
ٱلْوَدُودُ ﴿١٤﴾ ذُو ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱلْمَجِيدُ ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١٦﴾﴾

**Allah** عَزَّوَجَلَّ **says:** *{Indeed, those who have tortured the believing men and believing women and then have not repented will have the punishment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the Burning Fire. Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds will have gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the great attainment. Indeed, the vengeance of your Lord is severe. Indeed, it is He Who originates [creation] and repeats. And He is the Forgiving, the Loving , the Lord of the Throne, the Glorious He does whatever He wills}* [al-Buruj 85:10-16].

## Commentary

*{Indeed, those who have tortured [fatanu] the believing men and believing women}* that is, they burnt them with fire.

The word fatanu (which comes from the same root as fitnah) is translated here as tortured; a similar usage occurs in the verse: *{[It is] the Day they will be tormented [yuftanoona] over the Fire}* [adh-Dhariyat 51:13].

It was also said that what is meant is that they prevented them from practising their religion so that they would recant it.

*{and then have not repented}* that is, from their disbelief and their actions.

Persisting in disbelief is worse than persecuting the believers. This is a hint to the polytheists that if they repent and believe, they will be safe from the punishment of Hell.

Al-Hasan al-Basri said: Look at this immense generosity. They killed the close friends of Allah, yet He called them to repentance and forgiveness!

## Commentary

*{[they] will have the punishment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the Burning Fire}*. That is because of their disbelief. In the Hereafter, they will have a further punishment in addition to the punishment for their disbelief, because they burned the believers. This is like the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Those who disbelieved and averted [others] from the way of Allah - We will increase them in punishment over [their] punishment}* [an-Nahl 16:88].

**Al-Hareeq** (the Burning Fire) is one of the names of Hell, like as-Sa'eer (the Blaze).

*{Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds}* that is, those who affirmed the oneness of Allah. This refers to the people who were burned by those who dug the trench, and to all others who affirm the oneness of Allah (Tawhid) and strive to obey Allah, following His commands and heeding His prohibitions.

*{[they] will have gardens beneath which rivers flow}* that is, in the Hereafter, with Allah, they will have gardens through which flow rivers of water, wine, milk and honey.

*{That is the great attainment}* that is, this is the great achievement and victory, in which they will attain what they sought by believing in Allah in this world.

*{Indeed, the vengeance of your Lord is severe}*. **The word batsh**, translated here as vengeance, refers to seizing with violence. It is described as severe to indicate that the punishment will be multiplied for the evildoers and tyrants. Such is the way of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, as mentioned in the verse: *{Know that Allah is severe in penalty}* [al-Ma'idah 5:98].

*{Indeed, it is He Who originates [creation] and repeats}* that is, it is He Who decides to originate and to repeat. In other words, He creates people in the first place, then He will re-create them at the resurrection. This is like the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And it is He Who begins creation; then He repeats it}* [ar-Rum 30:27].

*{And He is the Forgiving}* that is, the One Who forgives. **Forgiveness is the concealment, pardon and overlooking of sin**.

Forgiveness is not only concealing sin; rather it is concealing it and not bringing the individual to account for it.

## Commentary

*{the Loving}*. The name al-Wadood (the Loving) comes from the root wudd, which refers to pure love. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is the Beloved, and He is also One Who loves. Thus he is Wadood, loving and is loved.

*{the Lord of the Throne}* that is, the owner of the Throne, over which He عَزَّوَجَلَّ rose (istiwa).

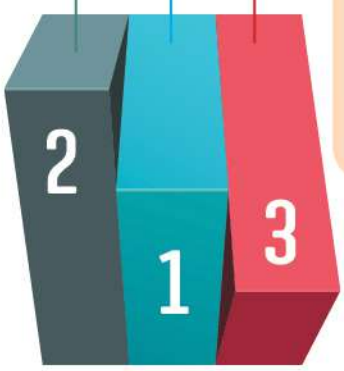
*{the Glorious [al-Majeed]}* – Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ possesses the attribute of glory [majd]; this refers to the One Who has great and majestic attributes.

*{He does whatever He wills}* because He عَزَّوَجَلَّ has complete power. Therefore no one can stop Him or reverse His decision or put back His decree.

## What we learn from the verses:

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ may give power to His enemies over His close friends, so that they kill them and burn them, and may even violate their honour. But there is divine wisdom in that, for the believers who are afflicted will have an immense reward with Allah, whereas Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ will grant respite to the transgressing disbelievers, leaving them to get carried away, and then seizing them with punishment.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ uses the word **al-Hareeq** (the Burning Fire) in this surah, although that may be understood from the words "the punishment of Hell"; this is done to match the hareeq (fire) in the trench, using the same word that referred to that event, even though there is a huge difference between the two.




The mercy of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is an open door that will not be shut in the face of anyone who turns back to Him and repents, even if his sins are immense.

## Activities

1. **Fill in the gaps:**

a. **Persisting in ..... is worse than .....**

b. **Al-Hasan al-Basri said: Look at this ..... They killed the close friends of Allah, yet He .....!**

2. **Compare and contrast the phrases** *{and they will have the punishment of the Burning Fire}* **and** *{beneath which rivers flow}*.

.....

.....

.....

3. **In the table below, write all the names and attributes of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ that are mentioned in the passage above, with their meanings:**

| Name/attribute | Meaning |
|---|---|
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﴿هَلۡ أَتَىٰكَ حَدِيثُ ٱلۡجُنُودِ ١٧ فِرۡعَوۡنَ وَثَمُودَ ١٨ بَلِ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ فِي
تَكۡذِيبٖ ١٩ وَٱللَّهُ مِن وَرَآئِهِم مُّحِيطُۢ ٢٠ بَلۡ هُوَ قُرۡءَانٞ مَّجِيدٞ ٢١ فِي
لَوۡحٖ مَّحۡفُوظِۭ ٢٢﴾

**Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:** *{Has there reached you the story of the soldiers – [Those of] Pharaoh and Thamood? But they who disbelieve are in [persistent] denial, while Allah encompasses them from behind. But this is a glorious Quran [Inscribed] in a Preserved Tablet}* [al-Buruj 85:17-22].

## Commentary

*{Has there reached you the story of the soldiers}*. Here Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says to His Prophet, Muhammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: Has there come to you, O Muhammad, news of the troops who gathered to fight against Allah and His Messenger with their plots and intent to do harm? Has news reached you of what Allah sent upon them of punishment, and sent down upon them of vengeance which no one could ward off from them?

This is like an affirmation of what He said in verse 12, *{Indeed, the vengeance of your Lord is severe}*. In other words, when He punishes the wrongdoers, He seizes them with the seizure of one Exalted in Might and Perfect in Ability.

*{[Those of] Pharaoh and Thamood}* This refers to two different stories:

As for the story of Pharaoh, Allah destroyed him and his troops, and saved the Children of Israel.

As for the story of Thamud, Allah destroyed them to the last man, and saved only Salih and the few who were with him.

*{But they who disbelieve are in [persistent] denial}* that is, those polytheists will continue to persist in their denial and harsh rejection of you and of what you have brought, and they will not learn anything from those disbelievers who came before them.

## Commentary

*{While Allah encompasses them from behind}* that is, He knows them well and none of their deeds are hidden from Him, and He decrees that there will befall them what befell those who came before them. Hence they cannot escape Him or escape His knowledge, power or punishment. **Encompassing a thing** means surrounding it from all sides.

*{But this is a Glorious Quran}*. This is a rejection of their disbelief and proving them to be wrong in their rejection. It is also an affirmation of the truth. In other words, the matter is not as they say; rather it is a Book that is honoured and held in high esteem among other revealed Books.

The fact that the Quran is described as Glorious (Majeed) does not mean that this description is limited to the Quran only; rather it is a description of the Quran and of the one who learns this Quran, adheres to it and carries out his duties towards it. He will attain glory and honour, and will be raised in status in this world and the Hereafter.

*{[Inscribed] in a Preserved Tablet}* that is, protected from distortion, alteration and change, and protected against the devils tampering with it.

What is meant is the Preserved Tablet (al-Lawh al-Mahfuz) in which Allah has kept all things. It is the Mother of the Book (Umm al-Kitab) of which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Allah eliminates what He wills or confirms, and with Him is the Mother of the Book}* [ar-Ra'd 13:39].

## What we learn from the verses:

Questions in the Quran are not asked for the purpose of finding out information, for Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ does not ask such questions of His creation. Rather questions appear in the Quran for many reasons, including: affirmation, rebuke, amazement, alarming, urging, scorning, informing, and stating that something is unlikely. This is a brilliant style that is unique to the Quran.

1

## What we learn from the verses:

2

In some books of Quranic exegesis (tafsir), it says that the Preserved Tablet (al-Lawh al-Mahfuz) is in the forehead of Israfeel, or that it was created from a green emerald, and so on. All of that is not proven. Rather this is a matter of the unseen concerning which nothing can be accepted except a text of the Quran or sahih Sunnah.

## Activities

1. *{Has there reached you the story of the soldiers – [Those of] Pharaoh and Thamood?}* **This verse refers in brief to the stories of Pharaoh and Thamud. Give a summary of their stories, based on what is mentioned in the Quran.**

.....

.....

2. **Explain the connection between the verse** *{Has there reached you the story of the soldiers}* **and the verse** *{Indeed, the vengeance of your Lord is severe}*.

.....

.....

3. **Questions appear frequently in the Quran. Give some examples of that, explaining what meaning each question is highlighting.**

.....

.....

# UNIT 3

## Surat at-Tariq is a Makkan surah (revealed before the Hijrah)

Al-Bayhaqi narrated that Ibn Abbas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا said: *{By the sky and the night comer}* [Surat at-Tariq] was revealed in Makkah.

﴿وَٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلطَّارِقِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَآ أَدْرَىٰكَ مَا ٱلطَّارِقُ ﴿٢﴾ ٱلنَّجْمُ ٱلثَّاقِبُ ﴿٣﴾ إِن كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ ﴿٤﴾ فَلْيَنظُرِ ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ ﴿٥﴾ خُلِقَ مِن مَّآءٍ دَافِقٍ
﴿٦﴾ يَخْرُجُ مِنۢ بَيْنِ ٱلصُّلْبِ وَٱلتَّرَآئِبِ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّهُۥ عَلَىٰ رَجْعِهِۦ لَقَادِرٌ ﴿٨﴾ يَوْمَ تُبْلَى
ٱلسَّرَآئِرُ ﴿٩﴾ فَمَا لَهُۥ مِن قُوَّةٍ وَلَا نَاصِرٍ ﴿١٠﴾﴾

**Allah** عَزَّ وَجَلَّ **says:** *{By the sky and the night comer – And what can make you know what is the night comer? It is the piercing star – There is no soul but it has over it a keeper watching it. So let man observe from what he was created. He was created from a fluid, ejected, emerging from between the backbone and the ribs. Indeed, Allah, to return him [to life], is Able. The Day when secrets will be put on trial, then man will have no power or any helper}* [at-Tariq 86:1-10].

### What has been narrated concerning it:

It was narrated that Jabir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: Muadh prayed Maghrib and recited al-Baqarah and an-Nisa. The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Are you causing trouble, O Muadh? Is it not sufficient for you to recite** *{Wa's-samaa'i wa't-taariq (By the sky and the night comer)}* [Surat at-Tariq] **and** *{Wa'sh-shamsi wa duhaaha (By the sun and its brightness)}* [ash-Shams]**, and similar surahs?»**

Narrated by Ibn Hibban; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

## Commentary

*{By the sky and the night comer}*. Here Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ swears by the sky and what He has placed in it of great heavenly bodies.

The Arabic word sama (translated here as sky) refers to everything that is above you; even the clouds from which rain comes down may be called sama, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{He sends down from the sky [as-sama'], rain, and valleys flow according to their capacity}* [ar-Ra 'd 13:17].

*{And what can make you know what is the night comer?}* This question serves to make it more ambiguous and instill awe. In other words: What could tell you what the night comer is? Then Allah explains it by saying:

*{It is the piercing star}* that is, it is very bright and pierces the darkness with its light, penetrating the heavens until it is seen on earth.

This star is called tariq (night comer) because it is only seen at night and disappears by day. So it is like one who visits (yatruq) people at night.

*{There is no soul but it has over it a keeper watching it}* that is, every soul has a keeper from Allah, to guard it from troubles, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says elsewhere: *{For each one are successive [angels] before and behind him who watch over him by the decree of Allah}* [ar-Ra'd 13:11].

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ explains the role of this keeper in the passage in which He says:

*{And indeed, [appointed] over you are keepers, noble and recording, they know whatever you do}* [al-Infitar 82:10-12].

*{So let man observe from what he was created}* that is, let man think of the weakness of the origin from which he was created. This is an instruction to acknowledge the resurrection, for the One Who is able to initiate creation is more able to repeat it, as He says: *{And it is He Who begins creation; then He repeats it, and that is [even] easier for Him}* [ar-Rum 30:27].

*{He was created from a fluid, ejected}* namely semen, which emerges in gushes from the man. Hence Allah says: *{Emerging from between the backbone and the ribs}* that is, from between the man's backbone and ribs at the top of his chest. This is indicative of the depth from which this semen comes, and that it emerges from a secure place inside the body.

## Commentary

**Some of the scholars said: *{Emerging from between the backbone}* that is, the backbone of the man, *{and the ribs}* that is, the ribs of the woman. But this is contrary to the apparent meaning of the text. The correct view is that what emerges from between the backbone and the ribs is the semen of the man, because Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ mentions this in the context of speaking about a fluid that is ejected, and this is what comes out of the man.**

*{Indeed, Allah, to return him [to life], is Able}* that is, Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is able to resurrect man after his death, so if he thinks of his origin, he will realize that the One Who is able to do that (create him in the first place) is able to resurrect him.

This is by way of proving something that will happen in the future by comparing it to something tangible that exists at present. This is a clear and rational analogy.

*{The Day when secrets will be put on trial}* that is, the secrets of people's hearts will be examined and disclosed, with what they concealed in this world, and everything that was harboured in people's hearts, good or bad, will be shown. This is like the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{But does he not know that when the contents of the graves are scattered, and that within the hearts is obtained}* [al-Adiyat 100:9-10].

*{Then man will have no power or any helper}*. Man will have no strength or support with which to defend himself, and he will have no helper to protect him from the punishment of Allah.

## What we learn from the verses:

1

**The phrasing of the verse *{There is no soul but it has over it a keeper watching it}* is an emphatic affirmation that there is no soul but it has over it a keeper from Allah, to watch it, write down its deeds and keep a record of it. That keeper is appointed over it by the command of Allah. This indicates that it is essential to watch oneself and take stock of oneself.**

## What we learn from the verses:

2

What is required of the Muslim is to pay more attention to the deeds of the heart than to the deeds of the physical faculties, because that is what everything depends on. So we must pay attention to our hearts, and their deeds and beliefs, and we must rid them of the blemishes of shirk, innovation (bidah), rancour, grudges, resentment towards what Allah sent down to His Messenger ﷺ, resentment towards the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم, and other things of which we should keep our hearts free.

## Activities

1 **Complete the following:**

a **This star is called tariq (night comer) because it** .....

b **The Arabic word sama (translated here as sky) refers to** .....

2 **What is the benefit that a person may gain by observing from what he was created?**

.....

.....

3 **What do we learn from the description of deeds as "secrets" in the verse,** *{The Day when secrets will be put on trial}*?

.....

.....

﴿وَٱلسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ ٱلرَّجۡعِ ﴿١١﴾ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ ذَاتِ ٱلصَّدۡعِ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّهُۥ لَقَوۡلٞ فَصۡلٞ ﴿١٣﴾
وَمَا هُوَ بِٱلۡهَزۡلِ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّهُمۡ يَكِيدُونَ كَيۡدٗا ﴿١٥﴾ وَأَكِيدُ كَيۡدٗا ﴿١٦﴾ فَمَهِّلِ ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ
أَمۡهِلۡهُمۡ رُوَيۡدَۢا ﴿١٧﴾﴾

**Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:** *{By the sky which returns [rain] and [by] the earth which cracks open, indeed, the Quran is a decisive statement, and it is not amusement. Indeed, they are planning a plan, but I am planning a plan. So allow time for the disbelievers. Leave them awhile}* [at-Tariq 86:11-17].

## Commentary

*{By the sky which returns [rain]}*. This is revisiting the oath. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ swears a second time in the same surah by the sky (as-sama) which brings rain repeatedly, time after time.

*{And [by] the earth which cracks open}* that is, the earth which cracks and is split to allow the growth of plants, trees and crops, and the emergence of rivers. This is like the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Then We broke open the earth, splitting [it with sprouts]}* [Abasa 80:26].

*{Indeed, the Quran is a decisive statement}*. This is what is attested to by the oath, that the Quran is true and distinguishes between truth and falsehood.

*{And it is not amusement}* that is, it is serious and is not a jest, falsehood or nonsense.

*{Indeed, they are planning a plan}* that is, they are scheming to call the people to that which goes against the Quran and they are plotting against the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

## Commentary

*{But I am planning a plan}* and the plan of Allah is to let them get carried away in their heedlessness, unaware of what lies in store, so that the truth will be made manifest, and so it will be made known who will prevail, for the human being is too weak and too insignificant to be able to resist the plan of the Most Strong and All-Knowing.

*{So allow time for the disbelievers}* that is, give them time and do not be impatient regarding them; do not be preoccupied with seeking vengeance or try to hasten it.

*{Leave them awhile}* that is, for a short while. And you will see, O Muhammad, what will befall them of punishment, vengeance and doom, as Allah says elsewhere:

*{We grant them enjoyment for a little; then We will force them to a massive punishment}* [Luqman 31:24].

## What we learn from the verses:

**It is obligatory to follow the Book of Allah which distinguishes between truth and falsehood. When the Muslims adhered to the Quran, they prevailed over the disbelievers and put an end to their evil, but when they turned away from the Quran, they were defeated, and so on. The further a person drifts away from the Book of Allah, the further removed he will be from honour and pride, and victory will be far away from him.**

## What we learn from the verses:

**2** This surah refers to a number of important matters:

- There is a watcher over every soul: *{There is no soul but it has over it a keeper watching it}*.
- There will be no help or support on the Day of Resurrection: *{The Day when secrets will be put on trial, then man will have no power or any helper}*.
- What is in the Quran is true and serious: *{Indeed, the Quran is a decisive statement, And it is not amusement}*.
- There is a stern warning: *{Indeed, they are planning a plan, but I am planning a plan. So allow time for the disbelievers. Leave them awhile}*.

## Activities

1. How do you feel when you read the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{There is no soul but it has over it a keeper watching it}*?

2. Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases:

a. {which returns [rain]}: .....

b. {which cracks open}: .....

c. {awhile}: .....

# UNIT 4

﴿سَبِّحِ ٱسْمَ رَبِّكَ ٱلْأَعْلَى ﴿١﴾ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ ﴿٢﴾ وَٱلَّذِى قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ
﴿٣﴾ وَٱلَّذِىٓ أَخْرَجَ ٱلْمَرْعَىٰ ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُۥ غُثَآءً أَحْوَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا
تَنسَىٰٓ ﴿٦﴾ إِلَّا مَا شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ يَعْلَمُ ٱلْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ وَنُيَسِّرُكَ
لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ﴿٨﴾﴾

**Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:** *{Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High Who created and fashioned in due proportion, and Who made all things according to a measure, then guided them, and who brings out the pasture, and [then] makes it black stubble. We will make you recite, [O Muhammad], and you will not forget except what Allah should will. Indeed, He knows what is declared and what is hidden. and We will guide you to the easy path}* [al-A'la 87:1-8].

## Its virtue and what was narrated concerning it:

It was narrated that Uqbah ibn Aamir al-Juhani رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: When the surah *{Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High}* was revealed, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Say this when you prostrate.»** Narrated by Abu Dawud and by al-Hakim, who classed it as sahih.

It was narrated that an-Numan ibn Basheer رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to recite in the Eid prayer, and in Jumuah prayer, *{Sabbih isma rabbik al-a'la (Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High)}* [Surat al-A'la] and *{Hal ataaka hadeeth ul-ghaashiyah (Has there reached you the report of the Overwhelming [event])}* [Surat al-Ghashiyah]. Narrated by Muslim.

It was narrated from Ubay ibn Ka'b رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to recite in Witr prayer *{Sabbih isma rabbik al-a'la (Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High)}* [Surat al-A'la], *{Qul ya ayyuha'l-kaafiroon (Say, "O disbelievers")}* [Surat al-Kaafirun] and *{Qul Huwa Allahu Ahad (Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One")}* [Surat al-Ikhlas]. Narrated by an-Nasai; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

It was narrated that Ibn Abbas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا said: When the surah *{Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High}* was revealed, he [the Messenger of Allah ﷺ] said: **«It is all in the scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa»** – referring to the issues mentioned in this surah.

## Commentary

*{Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High}* – tasbeeh (exalting or glorifying) means to declare Allah to be far above any defect that is not befitting to His majesty and greatness. Hence Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ enjoins us to exalt and glorify Him (tasbeeh), which is a type of remembering Him (dhikr), worshipping Him (ibadah), submitting to His majesty and humbling oneself before His greatness.

What is mentioned is exalting or glorifying His name, so the meaning of this verse is: Exalt and glorify your Lord to protect His name from what the polytheists did, who gave names to Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ that were not appropriate to Him.

It was said that exalting or glorifying the name of Allah means exalting or glorifying His Essence. This is how the Prophet ﷺ interpreted it, so he used this phrase when prostrating, as he used to say: **«Subhana Rabbiy al-A'la (Glory be to my Lord, Most High).»** The name *{al-A'la (the Most High)}* comes from the word al-ulu (exaltedness). The exaltedness of Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ is of two types:

### The exaltedness of His attributes and the exaltedness of His Essence:

- **With regard to the exaltedness of His attributes:** the most perfect attributes belong to Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ, as He says: *{and for Allah is the highest attribute}* [an-Nahl 16:60].
- **With regard to the exaltedness of His Essence:** this means that Allah is exalted far above His slaves and is above His Throne.

*{Who created and fashioned in due proportion}* – He created creation and fashioned every created thing in the best shape. This is like the verse in which He عَزَّ وَجَلَّ says: *{Who created you, fashioned you and made you well-proportioned}* [al-Infitar 82:7].

## Commentary

*{and Who made all things according to a measure, then guided them}* that is, Who created all things according to specific measurements, then guided each creation to that which is appropriate for it. So you will find that Allah has guided each created thing to what it needs, as mentioned in the verse: *{He said, "Our Lord is He Who gave each thing its form and then guided [it]"}* [Ta-Ha 20:50].

*{And who brings out the pasture}* that is, pasturage consisting of different types of plants and crops on which animals graze.

*{And [then] makes it black stubble}* the word translated here as stubble refers to dried plants. In other words, He makes this green pasturage into dry stubble.

*{black}* – the word ahwa, translated here as black, comes from a word that refers to colours that are so dark that they are almost black, because dry stubble becomes dark green, almost black.

*{We will make you recite, [O Muhammad], and you will not forget}* that is, We will make you a reciter of that which Jibreel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ brings to you of Revelation, so that you will not forget any of it. This is a guarantee from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ that He will preserve the Quran and protect it against any loss, and it is a promise from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ to His Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to protect the Revelation for him. It is like the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Verily, it is incumbent upon Us to enable you to memorize it and enable you to recite it}* [al-Qiyamah 75:17]. In other words: It is incumbent upon Us to collect it in your heart and it is incumbent upon Us to make you able to recite it.

*{Except what Allah should will}* that is, except what Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ wills that you should forget, for the matter is in His Hand عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

### What Allah caused the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to forget is of two types:

- **The first type** is that concerning which Allah willed that its recitation should be abrogated, as Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: Among that which was revealed was that if an old man and an old woman commit zina (adultery), they are to be stoned, then it was abrogated.
- **The second type** is that which the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ might forget temporarily, as happens to any other human being, such as that which he forgot sometimes during his prayer.

## Commentary

*{Indeed, He knows what is declared and what is hidden}* that is, He knows what people show openly and what they conceal of their words and deeds, for He knows what is secret and what is open, and nothing of that is hidden from Him.

*{and We will guide you to the easy path}*. This is further glad tidings to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

What it means is: We shall make it easy for you to do good deeds and say good words, and We will make an easy path for you, just as We will make the revelation easy for you so that you will memorize it and learn it.

## What we learn from the verses:

### 1 What is addressed to the Messenger ﷺ in the Quran is of three types:

**The first type**

is that concerning which there is proof that it is addressed only to him and is unique to him, such as the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Have We not filled your heart for you with reassurance and comfort}* [al-Inshirah 94:1].

**The second type**

is that concerning which there is proof that it is general in meaning and includes both the Prophet ﷺ and his ummah, such as the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{O you who have believed, when you rise to [perform] prayer, wash …}* [al-Ma'idah 5:6].

**The third type**

is that of which the wording is addressed to the Prophet ﷺ, but the ruling includes both him and his ummah, such as the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High}* [al-A'la 87:1].

## What we learn from the verses:

2 Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ gives glad tidings to His Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and to his ummah that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has guaranteed to preserve His Book and to enable His Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to memorize it all by heart. He also promised to enable him to recite it. It is proven in as-Sahih from Ibn Abbas رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا that the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to feel overwhelmed with the revelation when Jibreel came down, and he would move his lips and tongue, trying to memorize it and fearing that he would forget it. So it was said to him: *{Move not your tongue with it, [O Muhammad], to hasten with recitation of the Quran. Verily, it is incumbent upon Us to enable you to memorize it and enable you to recite it}* [al-Qiyamah 75:16-17]. In other words: It is incumbent upon Us to collect it in your heart and it is incumbent upon Us to make you able to recite it.

3 Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ guided His Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to the easy path in all his affairs. He was never given a choice between two things but he chose the easier of them, as was narrated from him by Aisha رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا in as-Sahihayn.

In Sahih al-Bukhari **it is narrated that a slave woman would take the hand of the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and lead him wherever she wanted (this is not to be taken literally; rather it is a metaphor meaning that he would go with her to see what he could do when she called on him for help).**

## Activities

1 **Fill the gaps in the following:**

a **The exaltedness of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is of two types: the exaltedness of** ..... ..... **and the exaltedness of** .....**.**

b **Tasbeeh of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ means** .....**.**

c **Stubble is** .....**.**

2 **Mention examples of being easy-going in your interactions with others that is required of you as a Muslim.**

3 **What is meant by the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ forgetting the Quran?**

﴿فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ ٱلذِّكْرَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ سَيَذَّكَّرُ مَن يَخْشَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾ وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا
ٱلْأَشْقَى ﴿١١﴾ ٱلَّذِى يَصْلَى ٱلنَّارَ ٱلْكُبْرَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾ ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ
﴿١٣﴾ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن تَزَكَّىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ وَذَكَرَ ٱسْمَ رَبِّهِۦ فَصَلَّىٰ ﴿١٥﴾ بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ
ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا ﴿١٦﴾ وَٱلْءَاخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰٓ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَفِى
ٱلصُّحُفِ ٱلْأُولَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾ صُحُفِ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ ﴿١٩﴾﴾

**Allah** عَزَّوَجَلَّ **says:** *{So remind, if the reminder should benefit; he who fears [Allah] will be reminded. But the wretched one will avoid it – [He] who will [enter and] burn in the greatest Fire, neither dying therein nor living. He has certainly succeeded who purifies himself and mentions the name of his Lord and prays. But you prefer the worldly life, while the Hereafter is better and more enduring. Indeed, this is in the former scriptures, the scriptures of Abraham and Moses}* [al-A'la 87:9-19].

## Commentary

*{So remind, if the reminder should benefit}* that is, so long as the reminder will be accepted and the exhortation will be heeded, whether what results from the reminder is all or some of the goal.

**What this verse means** is that if the reminder will not be of benefit, meaning that the reminder will exacerbate the evil or detract from what is good, then reminding is not enjoined; rather it is not allowed.

*{He who fears [Allah] will be reminded}* that is, he will pay heed to your reminder who fears Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and knows that He will requite him for his deeds, so the reminder will increase him in fear of Allah and righteousness.

*{But the wretched one will avoid it}*. This is the second category. It refers to those who will not benefit from the reminder, and that includes the one who avoids the reminder and keeps away from it. He is the wretched one among the disbelievers, because of his persistence in disbelieving in Allah, indulging in sin and disobeying Him.

## Commentary

*{[He] who will [enter and] burn in the greatest Fire}* which is the fire of Hell.

*{Neither dying therein nor living}* that is, he will receive a painful punishment, from which there will be no relief through death, and he will not live a dignified life, to the extent that such people will wish for death but it will not be granted to them, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says elsewhere: *{[Death] is not decreed for them so they may die, nor will its torment be lightened for them}* [Fatir 35:36]. And Allah says about the people of Hell: *{And they will call, "O Malik, let your Lord put an end to us!" He will say, "Indeed, you will remain"}* [az-Zukhruf 43:77].

*{He has certainly succeeded who purifies himself}* that is, the one who purifies himself of shirk then believes in Allah Alone, follows His commands, and purifies himself of bad characteristics.

*{And mentions the name of his Lord}* that is, he remembers Allah in his heart and in his words, because he utters the name of Allah and says: SubhanAllah wa'l-hamdu Lillah wa Allahu akbar (Glory be to Allah, praise be to Allah, Allah is most great). Thus he is one who remembers and mentions the name of Allah.

*{and prays}* that is, he mentions the name of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ when worshipping Him, when he prays and does other acts of worship.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ mentions prayer, because it is the most essential of deeds, and the noblest and best of them. What is required is to pray regularly, doing all the essential parts of prayer and offering the prayers on time.

*{But you prefer the worldly life}* that is, but you do not do that; rather you prefer the transient pleasures of this world, and you are content with them and at ease with them.

It was narrated from Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that he recited this verse, then he said: Do you know why we prefer the life of this world over the Hereafter? It is because this world is present and its good things, food, drink, pleasures and delights are readily available to us, whereas the Hereafter is hidden from us, so we take that which is readily available and forget that which is deferred.

*{While the Hereafter is better and more enduring}* that is, the realm of the Hereafter, namely Paradise, is better and more enduring than this world.

## Commentary

*{Indeed, this is in the former scriptures}* that is, what has been mentioned above about the success of the one who purifies himself, and so on.

It was said that what is meant is that the issues mentioned in this surah are all mentioned in the former scriptures.

*{The scriptures of Abraham and Moses}* that is, the Books of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ that were sent down to His messengers all stated that the Hereafter is better and more enduring than this world, and they contained exhortations that softened people's hearts and by means of which their condition could be rectified.

## What we learn from the verses:

1. **Based on the way in which they react to the reminder, people may be divided into two categories:**
   - **The first** category is those who fear Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. They are the ones of whom Allah says: *{And those who, when reminded of the verses of their Lord, do not fall upon them deaf and blind}* [al-Furqan 25:73].
   - **The second** category is those who avoid the reminder and do not benefit from it. Such people are described as wretched, as it says in Surat Hud: *{As for those who were [destined to be] wretched, they will be in the Fire}* [Hud 11:106].

2. **Success comes from purifying oneself,** and the greatest means of purifying oneself – after understanding and adhering to correct Tawhid – is purifying oneself by following the Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, meaning that you do not introduce any innovation into his religion, small or great, with regard to beliefs, words, or actions, unlike what some innovators do of making up adhkar that are innovations either in terms of the phrases used and the way they are put together, or in the way they are performed, their type, or the manner in which they are done, as is the practice of the followers of some Sufi tareeqahs and others like them.

## What we learn from the verses:

**3** **Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has made a person's well-being and adherence to faith conditional on three things, in the following order:**

- **The first** is removing ailments of the heart, such as false beliefs and the like. This is referred to by the words *{purifies himself}*.
- **The second** is always thinking of Allah and the attributes of His perfection and wisdom, so that he will both fear Him and have hope in Him. This is referred to in the words *{And mentions the name of his Lord}*.
- **The third** is focusing on obedience to Allah and worship of Him. This is referred to in the words *{and prays}*.

## Activities

1. **What is the reason for Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ saying** *{So remind, if the reminder should benefit}* **after having said** *{We will make you recite, [O Muhammad], and you will not forget}*? **Show the connection between this instruction to the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and how the seeker of knowledge should be.**

.....

2. **Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:** *{Neither dying therein nor living}*. **How does Allah state that the people of Hell will be neither dead nor alive?**

.....

3. **Sometimes we find similarities between our religion and what we hear about from the followers of other religions. How do you explain that? Answer in the light of the verses that you have studied.**

.....

# UNIT 5

﴿هَلْ أَتَىٰكَ حَدِيثُ ٱلْغَٰشِيَةِ ﴿١﴾ وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَٰشِعَةٌ ﴿٢﴾
عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ ﴿٣﴾ تَصْلَىٰ نَارًا حَامِيَةً ﴿٤﴾ تُسْقَىٰ مِنْ عَيْنٍ ءَانِيَةٍ ﴿٥﴾
لَّيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِن ضَرِيعٍ ﴿٦﴾ لَّا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِن جُوعٍ ﴿٧﴾﴾

**Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:** *{Has there reached you the report of the Overwhelming [event]? [Some] faces, that Day, will be humbled, working [hard] and exhausted. They will [enter to] burn in an intensely hot Fire. They will be given drink from a boiling spring. For them there will be no food except from a poisonous, thorny plant which neither nourishes nor avails against hunger}* [al-Ghashiyah 88:1-7].

## Commentary

*{Has there reached you the report of the Overwhelming [event]?}* that is, the Day of Resurrection, which will overwhelm all people with horrors and hardship.

The question *{Has there reached you…?}* serves to create interest and make the listener want to know more. It is like the verses in which Allah says: *{And has there come to you the news of the adversaries …?}* [Saad 38:21] *{Has there reached you the story of Moses?}* [an-Nazi'aat 79:15].

## Commentary

*{[Some] faces, that Day, will be humbled}* these are the faces of those who disbelieved in Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. They will be humbled and humiliated, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says elsewhere: *{And you will see them being exposed to the Fire, humbled from humiliation}* [ash-Shura 42:45], *{Their eyes humbled, humiliation will cover them}* [al-Ma'arij 70:44].

*{Working [hard] and exhausted}* that is, working and toiling in the Fire. They were too arrogant to worship Allah in this world, so they will be caused to work hard, toil and exhaust themselves in the Fire, because of what they will be forced to do of dragging their chains and shackles, and being immersed in the Fire of Hell. This – according to the most correct view of the commentators – is a description of their situation in the Hereafter, not in this world, as some of the commentators said, because it is limited by the mention of a specific time, which is the Day of Resurrection, and because what is meant here is to highlight the description of the people of Hell in general; it is not discussing their situation in this world.

*{They will [enter to] burn in an intensely hot Fire}* – an intensely hot fire will touch these faces after it has been heated to an ultimate degree.

*{They will be given drink from a boiling spring}* that is, the owners of these faces will be given to drink from an intensely hot spring of which the temperature has reached the ultimate heat. This is similar to the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{They will go around between it and scalding water, heated [to the utmost degree]}* [ar-Rahman 55:44].

*{For them there will be no food except from a poisonous, thorny plant}*. **Daree** (translated here as a poisonous, thorny plant) is a plant known as shibriq; when it dries out it is called daree. It is poisonous and has large thorns, in addition to the great difference between the daree of this world and the daree of Hell.

This is the food of the people of Hell, the worst, nastiest and most vile of food.

*{Which neither nourishes nor avails against hunger}* so it will not serve the purpose or ward off any harm, and it will not avail anything either outwardly or inwardly.

## What we learn from the verses:

1. The verse *{They will be given drink from a boiling spring}* indicates that things in the Hereafter cannot be compared to things in this world. That is because water extinguishes fire in this world, but in the Hereafter, there will be a spring of water in the Fire from which its people will be given to drink. So things in the Hereafter cannot be compared to things in this world, because of the great difference between the two realms.

2. We see how severe and immense the torment of the people of Hell will be. Hunger is one type of punishment that they will be given. They will ask for food and will be given daree, which will not ward off from them the pangs of hunger.

## Activities

1. **List the names of the Day of Resurrection that you have come across during your study of this curriculum.**

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2. *{They will be given drink from a boiling spring}* **– how does this verse indicate that things in the Hereafter are different from things in this world?**

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﴿وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاعِمَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ لِّسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ ﴿٩﴾ فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ﴿١٠﴾ لَّا
تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَاغِيَةً ﴿١١﴾ فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوعَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾ وَأَكْوَابٌ
مَّوْضُوعَةٌ ﴿١٤﴾ وَنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَزَرَابِيُّ مَبْثُوثَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾﴾

**Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:** *{[Other] faces, that Day, will show pleasure. With their effort [they are] satisfied in an elevated garden, wherein they will hear no unsuitable speech. Within it is a flowing spring. Within it are couches raised high. And cups put in place and cushions lined up and carpets spread around}* [al-Ghashiyah 88:8-16].

## Commentary

*{[Other] faces, that Day, will show pleasure}*. This is a description of how the righteous and good will be. On the Day of Resurrection, their faces will reflect pleasure and joy, because of what Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has given them of ease and great reward.

*{With their effort [they are] satisfied}* that is, they will be satisfied with what they sent on ahead in this world of righteous deeds and kindness to the slaves of Allah.

*{Satisfied}* for they will have found the reward of their deeds stored up, and they will be grateful for the outcome and pleased with it.

*{In an elevated garden}* in the highest of illiyyun, the houses of which are lofty dwellings and its centre is al-Firdaws, above which is the Throne of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. It has chambers above which are chambers built high, beneath which rivers flow.

## Commentary

*{Wherein they will hear no unsuitable speech}* that is, in Paradise no idle talk, falsehood, foul speech, insults or curses will be heard. Rather their speech will be tasbeeh (SubhanAllah (glory be to Allah)), tahmeed (Alhamdu Lillah (praise be to Allah)), tahleel (Laa ilaaha illa Allah (there is no god worthy of worship except Allah)) and takbeer (Allahu akbar (Allah is most great). They will be inspired to glorify Allah like breathing; it will not be difficult for them and it will require no effort on their part.

*{Within it is a flowing spring}* that is, springs flowing with different kinds of delicious drinks which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has mentioned in the verse in which He says: *{wherein are rivers of water unaltered, rivers of milk the taste of which never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of purified honey}* [Muhammad 47:15].

*{Within it are couches raised high}* that is, elevated and adorned with soft furnishings. Thus they are high in physical placement and are seats of honour.

*{And cups put in place}* that is, cups that are prepared and placed before them to drink from.

*{And cushions lined up}* that is, cushions of silk, brocade and other kinds of fabric which no one knows except Allah. They will be lined up, one next to another, for people to sit and recline on.

*{And carpets spread around}* zaraabi, translated here as carpets, refers to the finest type of carpet. They will be spread around on all sides in the place where they sit.

## What we learn from the verses:

1. The delights and pleasures of the Hereafter – some of which are mentioned in these verses – resemble worldly delights in nothing but name. The names are the same, but the realities are different, because Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And no soul knows what has been hidden for them of delight as reward for what they used to do}* [as-Sajdah 32:17].

2. In His Book, Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ describes Paradise and what it contains of delights and good things, to fill us with longing for it and encourage us to strive for it and strive for admittance to Paradise. This is the view of the righteous early generations (as-salaf as-salih), in contrast to that of the innovators.

## Activities

1. **Compare the situation of the people of Hell and the situation of the people of Paradise based on what is described in this surah.**

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2. **The idea of elevation and loftiness is mentioned repeatedly in the description of the situation of the people of Paradise. Explain this idea, whether it is stated clearly or implicitly in some verses.**

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﴿أَفَلَا يَنظُرُونَ إِلَى ٱلْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ﴿١٧﴾ وَإِلَى ٱلسَّمَآءِ كَيْفَ
رُفِعَتْ ﴿١٨﴾ وَإِلَى ٱلْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ ﴿١٩﴾ وَإِلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ
سُطِحَتْ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَآ أَنتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ﴿٢١﴾ لَّسْتَ عَلَيْهِم
بِمُصَيْطِرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِلَّا مَن تَوَلَّىٰ وَكَفَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْعَذَابَ
ٱلْأَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنَّ إِلَيْنَآ إِيَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُم ﴿٢٦﴾﴾

**Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:** *{Then do they not look at the camels - how they are created? And at the sky - how it is raised? And at the mountains - how they are firmly set up? And at the earth - how it is spread out? So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller. However, he who turns away and disbelieves – Then Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment. Indeed, to Us is their return. Then indeed, it is for Us to call them to account}* [al-Ghashiyah 88:17-26].

## Commentary

*{Then do they not look at the camels - how they are created?}* This is a question by way of rebuke. In other words: do these people, who deny the power of Allah to do these things, not look at the camels: how they were created and subjugated to their benefit?

Allah mentions camels, and He did not mention any other animals, because they are the animals that the people dealt with most at that time, and because they are the most beneficial of animals to people.

*{And at the sky - how it is raised}* that is, do they not look at the sky and how it is raised without pillars, with all that it contains of stars, sun, moon and other great signs?

*{And at the mountains - how they are firmly set up}* in this amazing form, and how they stabilize the earth and make it steady, and many great benefits have been placed in them.

## Commentary

*{And at the earth - how it is spread out}* that is, do they not see how Allah has made this vast earth spread out so that people are able to live on it and to cultivate it, build structures on it, and so on? The fact that it is spread out does not contradict the fact that the earth is round, because of its immense size.

*{So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder}* that is, remind all the people: exhort them, warn them and give them glad tidings, for you are only one who reminds; as for guidance, that is in the Hand of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

The reminder will not benefit everyone; rather it will only benefit the believer. *{And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers}* [adh-Dhariyat 51:55].

So if you are reminded, but you do not feel moved in your heart or find any benefit, then question yourself and understand that your faith is lacking.

*{You are not over them a controller}* that is, you were not sent with power over them to watch over their deeds. If you do what is required of you, there will be no blame on you after that, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says elsewhere:

*{We are most knowing of what they say, and you are not sent to compel them to believe. But remind by the Quran those who fear My warning}* [Qaf 50:45].

*{However, he who turns away and disbelieves}* that is, but whoever turns away from obedience and disbelieves in Allah after having been reminded,

*{Then Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment}* which will be eternal and severe, namely admittance to Hell in the Hereafter. This is worse than punishment in this world with hunger, famine and so on.

*{Indeed, to Us is their return}* that is, all creatures will return to Him and be gathered on the Day of Resurrection.

*{Then indeed, it is for Us to call them to account}*, then We will requite them for what they did of good and evil.

## What we learn from the verses:

The fact that the earth was spread out so that people could live on it and pursue their livelihoods does not contradict the fact that it is round. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{He wraps the night around the day and wraps the day around the night}* [az-Zumar 39:5]. It is well-known that night and day follow one another on earth, so if they are wrapped around one another, then the earth must be round.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And when the earth has been flattened out}* [al-Inshiqaq 84:3]. This will happen on the Day of Resurrection, and means that at present it is not flat; rather it is round.

This is also the reality that is easily proven and known for certain, because if you travel in a straight line from any point on earth heading west, you will return from the east to the point you set out from. The same applies with regard to north and south.

This is what is indicated by the religious texts, reason, science and photographic images.

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This passage explains the role of the Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in conveying the message: *{So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder}*. This is the role of everyone after him who seeks to call people to Allah: his role is to remind, and after that the reckoning is with Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

3

Guidance is in the Hand of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and it is not possible for us to guide even the closest of people to us except by His leave. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Indeed, [O Muhammad], you do not guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills}* [al-Qasas 28:56]. So do not be upset if you remind someone but then find him stubborn and argumentative, because guidance is in the Hand of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

## Activities

1. **From these verses, how can we make the natural sciences in harmony with the Islamic sciences? Explain that.**

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2. *{you are only a reminder}*. **If someone who calls people to Allah sees no response, what should he understand from this verse?**

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3. **The verses refer to different kinds of natural sciences. Mention what they are.**

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# UNIT 6

﴿وَٱلْفَجْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَٱلشَّفْعِ وَٱلْوَتْرِ ﴿٣﴾ وَٱلَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ
﴿٤﴾ هَلْ فِي ذَٰلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِي حِجْرٍ ﴿٥﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ
﴿٦﴾ إِرَمَ ذَاتِ ٱلْعِمَادِ ﴿٧﴾ ٱلَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي ٱلْبِلَٰدِ ﴿٨﴾
وَثَمُودَ ٱلَّذِينَ جَابُوا۟ ٱلصَّخْرَ بِٱلْوَادِ ﴿٩﴾ وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي ٱلْأَوْتَادِ ﴿١٠﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ
طَغَوْا۟ فِي ٱلْبِلَٰدِ ﴿١١﴾ فَأَكْثَرُوا۟ فِيهَا ٱلْفَسَادَ ﴿١٢﴾ فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ
رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ ﴿١٣﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِٱلْمِرْصَادِ ﴿١٤﴾﴾

**Allah** عَزَّوَجَلَّ **says:** *{By the dawn and [by] ten nights and [by] the even [number] and the odd and [by] the night when it passes, is there [not] in [all] that an oath [sufficient] for one of perception? Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with 'Aad – [With] Iram - who had lofty pillars, the likes of which had never been created in the land? And [with] Thamood, who carved out the rocks in the valley? And [with] Pharaoh, owner of the stakes? [All of] whom transgressed within the lands and increased therein the corruption, so your Lord poured upon them a scourge of punishment. Indeed, your Lord is ever vigilant}* [al-Fajr 89:1-14].

## What has been narrated concerning it:

It was narrated that Jabir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: Muadh began to pray, and another man came and prayed with him, but he made it lengthy, so that man left him and prayed by himself in some corner of the mosque, then he left. News of that reached Muadh, so he said: He is a hypocrite. He mentioned that to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who asked that young man about it. He said: O Messenger of Allah, I came to pray with him, but he made it too lengthy for me, so I left and prayed by myself in some corner of the mosque. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **«Are you causing trouble, O Muadh? Why not recite** *{Sabbih isma rabbik al-a'la (Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High)}* [Surat al-A'la], *{Wa'sh-shamsi wa duhaaha (By the sun and its brightness)}* [Surat ash-Shams], *{Wa'l-Fajr (By the dawn)}* [Surat al-Fajr], *{Wa'l-layli idha yaghshaa (By the night when it covers)}* [Surat al-Layl]?» Narrated by an-Nasai with a sahih isnad.

## Commentary

*{By the dawn}* – this is an oath sworn by the dawn, which is the shining light that appears in the east close to sunrise.

*{And [by] ten nights}* that is, the first ten nights of Dhu'l-Hijjah. It was also said that it refers to the last ten nights of Ramadan.

In Saheeh al-Bukhari it is narrated from Ibn Abbas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا, from the Prophet ﷺ, that he said: **«No deed on any day is better than a deed done on these days»** – meaning the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah. They said: Not even jihad? He said: **«Not even jihad, unless a man goes out, risking his life and his wealth, and does not come back with anything.»**

*{And [by] the even [number] and the odd}*. Here Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ swears by everything that occurs in pairs or individually, such as acts of worship, days and other things.

*{And [by] the night when it passes}*. This is an oath sworn by the night as it begins to approach and cast its darkness over people.

As defined in the religious texts, the night passes, starting at sunset and ending with the break of dawn.

*{Is there [not] in [all] that an oath [sufficient] for one of perception?}*. **Hijr** (translated here as perception) means reason. In other words: is there not, in what has been mentioned here, that which is sufficient for swearing an oath, for one who has reason? It is well-known that just some of that would be sufficient, for anyone who has reason.

Reason is called hijr (translated here as perception) because it restrains a person and keeps him from doing what is not appropriate. The root meaning of this word is prevention, hence the phrase hujira ala ash-shakhs (lit. the person was restrained), which means that he was declared legally incompetent and prevented from disposing of his wealth.

*{Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with 'Aad}* that is, have you not heard and understood how Allah dealt with that tyrannical and rebellious nation who refused to obey Him عَزَّ وَجَلَّ?

## Commentary

Allah had sent to them His Messenger Hud عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, but they rejected him and went against him. So Allah saved him and those who believed with him from them, and destroyed them with a screaming, violent wind: *{Which Allah imposed upon them for seven nights and eight days in succession, so you would see the people therein fallen as if they were hollow trunks of palm trees}* [al-Haqqah 69:7].

Allah tells us the story in more than one place in the Quran, so that the believers may learn a lesson from their destruction.

This verse is addressed to everyone to whom this Noble Book is addressed, namely all of humanity, and also the jinn.

*{[With] Iram}* – they were one of the tribes of Aad.

*{who had lofty pillars}* that is, firm structures and tall columns.

*{The likes of which had never been created in the land}* that is, nothing like them had ever been made before in that land, for they were strongly built and well-made.

*{And [with] Thamood}* – they were the people of Salih, and their dwellings are still known until now.

*{who carved out the rocks in the valley}* that is, with their strength, they carved out the rocks in the valley of Thamud, turning them into dwellings, as is mentioned in the verse: *{And you carve out of the mountains, homes, with skill}* [ash-Shu'ara 26:149].

*{And [with] Pharaoh, owner of the stakes}* that is, he had troops who supported him as the stakes or pegs support the tent and keep it steady.

*{[All of] whom transgressed within the lands}* – this refers to Aad, Thamud, Pharaoh and those who followed them. They transgressed in the land of Allah and harmed the slaves of Allah in both their religious and worldly affairs.

*{And increased therein the corruption}* This means committing acts of disbelief (kufr) and other kinds of sins, and striving to oppose the messengers and bar people from the path of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

*{So your Lord poured upon them a scourge of punishment}*. Allah sent down His punishment and vengeance upon them, because of the mischief and corruption they had wrought in the land, transgressing against the slaves of Allah therein. It was a severe punishment, whip-like in its swiftness.

*{Indeed, your Lord is ever vigilant}*. He عَزَّوَجَلَّ sees and hears everything, and He is watching those who disobey Him; He gives them respite for a short time, then He seizes them with the seizure of one Exalted in Might and Perfect in Ability.

## What we learn from the verses:

1

In the verse *{The likes of which had never been created in the land}*, we see that a human being may be described as creating something. Another example of that is seen in the hadith in which the Prophet ﷺ says of the image-makers: **«It will be said to them: 'Give life to that which you have created.'»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

But the act of creating that is attributed to a human being is not the same as the act of creating that is attributed to Allah, for the act of creating that is attributed to Allah is bringing something into existence from nothing after it did not exist, whereas the act of creating that is attributed to someone other than Allah is simply changing and altering something that already exists.

2

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ swears by the night, *{And [by] the night when it passes}*, because of the acts of worship that are done during the hours of night, such as Maghrib and Isha prayer, qiyam al-layl (voluntary prayers at night), Witr and so on.

And because at night a momentous event occurs, which is that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ comes down every night to the lowest heaven, when the last one third of the night remains, and He says: **«Who will ask of Me, that I may give him? Who will call upon Me, that I may respond to him? Who will ask Me for forgiveness, that I may forgive him?»** Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

This ummah will never be destroyed by that by which previous nations were destroyed, but it may be destroyed by Allah causing their conflict to occur among themselves, so there will be wars, enmity and turmoil among them, and some of them will be destroyed at the hands of others. Hence we must beware of turmoil and division, both visible and hidden.

3

## Activities

1. **Write a hadith under each of the following headings:**

| Name/attribute | Meaning |
|---|---|
| What was narrated about Surat al-Fajr | |
| The virtue of the ten nights | |
| The virtue of the last third of the night | |

2. **Explain the meanings of the following words:**

a. *{perception (hijr)}* .....

b. *{Iram}* .....

c. *{who had lofty pillars}* .....

d. *{who carved out the rocks}* .....

3. **Compare the description that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ gives of the people who built great civilizations in the past and how they were destroyed, with how people are so impressed nowadays by great, modern civilizations.**

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﴿فَأَمَّا ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ إِذَا مَا ٱبْتَلَىٰهُ رَبُّهُۥ فَأَكْرَمَهُۥ وَنَعَّمَهُۥ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّىٓ أَكْرَمَنِ ﴿١٥﴾
وَأَمَّآ إِذَا مَا ٱبْتَلَىٰهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُۥ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّىٓ أَهَٰنَنِ ﴿١٦﴾ كَلَّا ۖ بَل لَّا تُكْرِمُونَ
ٱلْيَتِيمَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تَحَٰٓضُّونَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ ٱلْمِسْكِينِ ﴿١٨﴾ وَتَأْكُلُونَ
ٱلتُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَّمًّا ﴿١٩﴾ وَتُحِبُّونَ ٱلْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا ﴿٢٠﴾﴾

**Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:** *{And as for man, when his Lord tries him and [thus] is generous to him and favors him, he says, «My Lord has honored me.» But when He tries him and restricts his provision, he says, «My Lord has humiliated me.» No! But you do not honor the orphan and you do not encourage one another to feed the poor. And you consume inheritance, devouring [it] altogether, and you love wealth with immense love}* [al-Fajr 89:15-20].

## Commentary

*{And as for man, when his Lord tries him and [thus] is generous to him and favors him, he says, "My Lord has honored me"}*. Tests from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ may be with good or ill, as He عَزَّوَجَلَّ says elsewhere: *{And We test you with evil and with good as trial}* [al-Anbiya 21:35].

In this verse, Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ tells us about the nature of man, that he is ignorant and a wrongdoer, for he thinks that if Allah is generous to him in this world and bestows blessings upon him, that this indicates that he is honoured by Him and is close to Him.

*{But when He tries him and restricts his provision, he says, "My Lord has humiliated me"}* – that is, if Allah tests him with poverty and restricts his provision, he believes this is humiliation from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

*{No!}* – This is a word of deterrence and rebuke, highlighting that this notion is false. In other words, the matter is not as man thinks; not everyone whom Allah blesses in this world is honoured by Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and not everyone whose provision is restricted is humiliated by Him.

## Commentary

*{But you do not honor the orphan}* that is, when Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ honours you with blessings, you do not show compassion to those who deserve honour, namely the orphans whose hearts have been broken by the loss of their fathers.

*{And you do not encourage one another to feed the poor}* that is, you do not urge one another to feed those in need, and if a person does not encourage others to do that, he is unlikely to feed them himself.

*{And you consume inheritance, devouring [it] altogether}* that is, you devour inheritance, so a person devours his own share and the share of others.

*{And you love wealth with immense love}* that is, you love wealth and the accumulation thereof; you are exceedingly fond of it and attached to it.

**What is meant is:** you do not understand the meaning of trials, so you do not try to pass the test by honouring orphans and encouraging one another to feed the poor; on the contrary, you devour inheritance and you love wealth immensely.

## What we learn from the verses:

1. We see how short-sighted man is, for he thinks that wealth and poverty reflect one's status before Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. That is because wealth and status are everything to people, which is why they are so keen to acquire wealth and they love it very much.

2. A person's situation in this life is not indicative of his status before Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. A man may enjoy a life of ease in this world, yet he is subject to divine wrath, or a man may be unkempt and dishevelled, unwelcome among people, but if he were to swear an oath urging Allah to do something, Allah would honour his oath.

## Activities

1. There are two types of trials. Describe them.

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2. Allah describes the evildoers as having four characteristics. Speak about the seriousness of these characteristics and the dangers they pose to communities.

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3. Mention five things that we learn from the verses quoted above.

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After Allah explains the reality of their reprehensible notion, when they misunderstood the nature of trials and why He may withhold or give, and cause people to be poor or rich, that is followed by a warning of the Day of Requital, as Allah says:

﴿كَلَّآ إِذَا دُكَّتِ ٱلْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا ﴿٢١﴾ وَجَآءَ رَبُّكَ وَٱلْمَلَكُ صَفًّا
صَفًّا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَجِاْيٓءَ يَوْمَئِذٍۭ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ
وَأَنَّىٰ لَهُ ٱلذِّكْرَىٰ ﴿٢٣﴾ يَقُولُ يَٰلَيْتَنِى قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِى ﴿٢٤﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ
لَّا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهُۥٓ أَحَدٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَا يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهُۥٓ أَحَدٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ يَٰٓأَيَّتُهَا ٱلنَّفْسُ
ٱلْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٢٧﴾ ٱرْجِعِىٓ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٨﴾ فَٱدْخُلِى فِى عِبَٰدِى
﴿٢٩﴾ وَٱدْخُلِى جَنَّتِى ﴿٣٠﴾﴾

**Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:** *{No! When the earth has been leveled - pounded and crushed - And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank, and brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but what good to him will be the remembrance? He will say, «Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life.» So on that Day, none will punish [as severely] as His punishment, and none will bind [as severely] as His binding [of the evildoers], [To the righteous it will be said], «O reassured soul, Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him], and enter among My [righteous] servants and enter My Paradise»}* [al-Fajr 89:21-30].

## Commentary

*{No! When the earth has been leveled - pounded and crushed}* that is, what you love of wealth and what you compete for of pleasures will not last forever.

Rather ahead of you is a momentous Day and great terror, in which the earth and the mountains will be crushed time and again, their features will be erased and the earth will be shaken mightily, as it says in the verse: *{When the earth is shaken with its [final] earthquake}* [az-Zalzalah 99:1].

*{And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank}* that is, row upon row, and Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ comes to judge between people in a manner that is befitting to His Majesty.

And the noble angels come, all the inhabitants of the heavens, rank upon rank, until they surround all of creation.

## Commentary

*{And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell}* which the angels will drag with chains.

It was narrated that Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«On that Day, Hell will be brought with seventy thousand reins, each rein held by seventy thousand angels, who will be dragging it.»** Narrated by Muslim.

*{that Day, man will remember}* – man will remember – out of regret and remorse – what he did before in his previous life, of evil and bad deeds, and his shortcomings in this world.

*{but what good to him will be the remembrance?}* For the time for remembering has passed.

*{He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life"}*. He will say that in regret for his heedlessness about the commands of Allah, and for the sins that he committed before, or for the paucity of his acts of obedience, if he fell short in doing them. *{"Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life"}* that is, for the eternal life, which is the life of the Hereafter, free of suffering and troubles.

*{So on that Day, none will punish [as severely] as His punishment}* that is, no one will be more severe in punishment on that day than Allah, to the one who disobeyed Him.

The word yu'adhdhib, translated above as punish, may also be read as yu'adhdhab (meaning he is punished); in that case, the meaning is: No one will be punished like this person.

*{And none will bind [as severely] as His binding [of the evildoers]}* that is, there is no one whose grasp and binding is more severe than Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

The word yoothiq, translated above as bind, may also be read as yoothaq (meaning he is bound); in that case the meaning is: No one will be bound like this person on that Day.

Then in the midst of that terror, horror, punishment and binding, a call will go out to the pure, believing soul, to whom it will be said:

*{O reassured soul}*, that found comfort in remembrance of Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ and in His promise, that believed what He عَزَّ وَجَلَّ said, and had certain faith that Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ was its Lord, and was patient in accepting His decree and obeying Him.

## Commentary

*{Return to your Lord}* that is, to closeness to Him and to His reward, and what He has prepared for His slaves in His Paradise.

*{well-pleased and pleasing [to Him]}* that is, pleased with the reward and pleasing to its Lord, for He is pleased with it and will make it pleased.

*{And enter among My [righteous] servants}* that is, among My sincere and devoted slaves.

*{And enter My Paradise}*. This will be said to such a soul at the time of death, and again on the Day of Resurrection.

## What we learn from the verses:

1

That Allah's coming (in a manner befitting to His Majesty) on the Day of Resurrection to judge between His slaves is something that will happen in a true sense, and it is not as suggested by those who deny the divine attributes, who say that what will come is His command or judgement. This is interpreting the words in a manner other than the apparent meaning. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ attributed the action of coming to Himself, which means that this action is attributed to Him in a true sense.

The belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah is that we understand the words of Allah and the words of His Messenger صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in accordance with the apparent meaning, and we do not distort the meaning or deny it.

2

The intense horror and different stages of the Day of Resurrection, and what will happen on it of momentous events that will cast fear into people's hearts and make them stare fixedly in terror, for Hell will be brought, with seventy thousand reins, each rein held by seventy thousand angels, who will be dragging it. The angels will surround all creatures, and Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ will come to judge between His slaves. So each person must prepare for that Day.

## What we learn from the verses:

3

The one who was heedless and careless will be filled with regret on the Day of Resurrection, and he will wish to return to this world in order to strive and send something ahead for his eternal life. But these verses point out what the individual should be doing in this world, namely hastening to do righteous deeds and keeping away from sins and haram actions.

## Activities

1. **How will Hell be brought on the Day of Resurrection? Describe that, supporting what you say with evidence.**

.....

2. **Think about how the disbeliever will describe his life in the Hereafter, when he says** *{Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life}*. **What is this life that we are living now?**

.....

3. **Mention the different modes of recitation in the following words, and explain how it affects the meaning:**

a. *{laa yu'adhdhib (none will punish)}* .....

b. *{wa laa yoothiq (And none will bind)}* .....

# UNIT 7

Surat al-Balad is a Makkan surah (revealed before the Hijrah)

﴿لَآ أُقۡسِمُ بِهَٰذَا ٱلۡبَلَدِ ١ وَأَنتَ حِلُّۢ بِهَٰذَا ٱلۡبَلَدِ ٢ وَوَالِدٖ وَمَا وَلَدَ ٣
لَقَدۡ خَلَقۡنَا ٱلۡإِنسَٰنَ فِي كَبَدٍ ٤ أَيَحۡسَبُ أَن لَّن يَقۡدِرَ عَلَيۡهِ أَحَدٞ ٥
يَقُولُ أَهۡلَكۡتُ مَالٗا لُّبَدًا ٦ أَيَحۡسَبُ أَن لَّمۡ يَرَهُۥٓ أَحَدٌ ٧ أَلَمۡ نَجۡعَل
لَّهُۥ عَيۡنَيۡنِ ٨ وَلِسَانٗا وَشَفَتَيۡنِ ٩ وَهَدَيۡنَٰهُ ٱلنَّجۡدَيۡنِ ١٠﴾

**Allah** عَزَّوَجَلَّ **says:** *{I swear by this city [Makkah] - And you, [O Muhammad], are a resident in this city - And [by] the father and that which was born [of him], We have certainly created man into hardship. Does he think that never will anyone overcome him? He says, «I have spent wealth in abundance.» Does he think that no one has seen him? Have We not made for him two eyes? And a tongue and two lips? And have shown him the two ways?}* [al-Balad 90:1-10].

## Commentary

*{I swear [Laa uqsimu] by this city [Makkah]}*. The word Laa (not translated here) is used here for emphasis and to alert the listener, and it is not used for negation in this instance. What is meant is: I swear by this city, namely Makkah; I swear by it because of its honour and because it is the greatest spot on earth.

An oath is used to affirm something by mentioning something that is held in high esteem by the oath-maker in particular.

It is not permissible to swear an oath by anything except Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

## Commentary

So no oath should be sworn by a prophet, or by a wali (close friend of Allah) or by anything else; rather an oath can only be sworn by Allah.

The Prophet ﷺ said: **«Whoever swears by anything other than Allah has disbelieved or has associated something with Allah (shirk).»** Narrated by at-Tirmidhi, who said: It is a hasan hadith.

*{And you, [O Muhammad], are a resident in this city}* that is, I swear by this city, and you are a resident in this city, because the fact that he was a resident in Makkah increased the city in honour.

**The word hill** (translated above as "resident"), may also mean "free of restriction." Thus the verse may also be translated as *{And you, [O Muhammad], are free of restriction in this city}*. According to this interpretation, this verse is a promise from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ that He would give the Messenger of Allah ﷺ permission to fight in the city and that it would be conquered and liberated at his hand.

*{And [by] the father and that which was born [of him]}* that is, and I swear by every father and what is born of him; this includes humans and others, because the father and that which is born to him are both among the signs of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

*{We have certainly created man into hardship}*. This is what is attested to by the oath. What is meant is humankind in general.

**The word kabad** (translated here as hardship) may also be used to refer to an upright stance.

The phrase *{into hardship}* refers to what the individual goes through of hardship in this world, and in seeking provision and striving to make himself obey Allah and avoid disobeying Him.

**This phrase fi kabad** (translated above as into hardship) may also be understood as meaning in the best shape and the best physique. Yet despite that, man does not give thanks to Allah for this immense blessing.

Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ said: It is appropriate that the verse may include both meanings – that is, in the best shape, with an upright stance, and at the same time it also refers to going through hardship and suffering in handling day-to-day matters.

## Commentary

*{Does he think that never will anyone overcome him?}* Does he think that no one will ever overcome him, so he transgresses and boasts about what he spends of wealth on his whims and desires, and thus he says, *{"I have spent wealth in abundance"}* – that is, a great deal of accumulated wealth on that which incurs the anger of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

The word ahlaktu (translated as I have spent) refers to squandering; thus spending on whims and desires and sinful actions is regarded as squandering and waste, because the spender does not benefit from what he spends; rather it will cause him harm.

*{Does he think that no one has seen him?}* That is, does this man think that no one sees him squandering wealth and spending it on that in which there is no benefit? All of this is a threat and a warning to the individual.

This is speaking of the disbeliever. In the case of the believer, he knows that Allah has power over him and that He is able to do all things, so he fears Him.

Then Allah reminds man of the blessings that He has bestowed upon him, as He says of blessings in this world:

*{Have We not made for him two eyes? And a tongue and two lips?}* – For beauty, seeing and speaking, and other necessary benefits.

Then Allah says concerning the blessings of religion: *{And have shown him the two ways?}* That is, We have shown him the way of good and the way of evil, the way of truth and the way of falsehood, the way of guidance and the way of misguidance. This is like the verses in which Allah says: *{Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful}* [al-Insan 76:3] *{And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it and inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness}* [ash-Shams 91:7-8].

## What we learn from the verses:

1

The eye, the tongue and the two lips are among the greatest blessings that Allah has bestowed on humans, as they are mentioned in the context of reminding man of His signs and blessings.

Man sees with his two eyes, and the eyes are connected to the heart, so if he looks at something haram, he is sinning, and if he looks at that which will bring him closer to Allah, he will gain reward.

He speaks with his tongue, and the two lips help him to form the words when he speaks. So if he speaks of that which is good, it will be to his credit, but if he speaks of that which is wrong and evil, it will be counted against him.

2

Man forgets the reality of his situation and is deceived by what his Creator has given him of strength and ability. Thus he begins to behave as if he will not be brought to account for his deeds and as if no one will ever have power over him. Thus he transgresses, abuses people, robs and plunders. This is a description of the man whose heart is devoid of faith.

## Activities

1. Complete the following phrases:

a. An oath is used to ..... something by mentioning ..... by the oath-maker .....

b. It is not permissible to swear an oath by anything except .....

c. So no oath should be sworn by ..... , or by ..... or by .....; rather an oath can only be sworn by .....

d. The Prophet ﷺ said: «Whoever swears by anything other than Allah has ..... or has .....»

2. Draw a line connecting each word from column A with the matching word in column B:

| A | B |
|---|---|
| hardship (al-kabad) | accumulated |
| in abundance | the path of good and evil |
| the two ways | toil |

3. What advice would you give to someone who is looking for peace of mind in this world, in the light of the verse *{We have certainly created man into hardship}*?

.....

.....

﴿ فَلَا ٱقۡتَحَمَ ٱلۡعَقَبَةَ ١١ وَمَآ أَدۡرَىٰكَ مَا ٱلۡعَقَبَةُ ١٢ فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ ١٣
أَوۡ إِطۡعَٰمٞ فِي يَوۡمٖ ذِي مَسۡغَبَةٖ ١٤ يَتِيمٗا ذَا مَقۡرَبَةٍ ١٥ أَوۡ مِسۡكِينٗا
ذَا مَتۡرَبَةٍ ١٦ ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَتَوَاصَوۡاْ بِٱلصَّبۡرِ وَتَوَاصَوۡاْ
بِٱلۡمَرۡحَمَةِ ١٧ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ أَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلۡمَيۡمَنَةِ ١٨ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا هُمۡ
أَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلۡمَشۡـَٔمَةِ ١٩ عَلَيۡهِمۡ نَارٞ مُّؤۡصَدَةُۢ ٢٠ ﴾

**Allah** عَزَّوَجَلَّ **says:** *{But he has not broken through the difficult pass. And what can make you know what is [breaking through] the difficult pass? It is the freeing of a slave or feeding on a day of severe hunger an orphan of near relationship or a needy person in misery and then being among those who believed and advised one another to patience and advised one another to compassion. Those are the companions of the right. But they who disbelieved in Our signs - those are the companions of the left. Over them will be fire closed in}* [al-Balad 90:11-20].

## Commentary

*{But he has not broken through the difficult pass}* that is, why has this man, who is deceived by his wealth, not broken through the difficult pass?

**The word aqabah,** translated here as difficult pass, refers to a path through the rugged mountains. The word translated here as **broken through** refers to embarking upon a difficult matter.

**The difficult pass is mentioned here** as a likeness that Allah gives of a person's striving against his nafs (self), his whims and desires and the Shaytan in order to do good deeds. Thus He describes him as being like one who strives to climb a mountain pass.

It was said that this is likening the burden of sins borne by the one who commits them to a difficult mountain pass. But if he does good and repents from those sins, he will be like one who tackled the difficult pass and broke through it.

And it was said that al-Aqabah is a mountain in Hell.

## Commentary

*{And what can make you know what is [breaking through] the difficult pass?}* That is, what can inform you about this mountain pass? This serves to highlight how important and significant this pass is.

*{It is the freeing of a slave}*. This is an explanation of the means to break through and overcome the difficult mountain pass. What is meant is manumitting a slave and liberating him from slavery and servitude. That also includes ransoming prisoners of war. It is one of the best and most beloved of deeds to Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

In as-Sahihayn it is narrated that Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **«Whoever frees a believing slave, for every limb of the slave, Allah will free one of his limbs from the Fire, even freeing the private part for the private part.»**

**At the beginning of Islam, Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq** رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ manumitted Bilal, Aamir ibn Fuhayrah, Umm Ubays, Zunayrah, an-Nahdiyah and her daughter, and the slave woman of Banu Mu'ammal, whom Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was torturing to make her give up Islam before he himself became Muslim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ.

Ibn Ishaq said: Abu Quhafah said to Abu Bakr: O my son, I see that you are freeing weak slaves. Why do you not free strong and tough men who could protect you and stand by you? Abu Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: **O my father, I only want what Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ wants.**

*{Or feeding on a day of severe hunger}* that is, feeding at a time of extreme hunger. This is one of the ways of breaking through the difficult pass.

*{An orphan of near relationship}* that is, feeding an orphan between whom and you there are ties of kinship.

*{Or a needy person in misery}* that is, feeding a needy person who is extremely poor and has nothing.

**What is meant is:** why does this person not spend his wealth on that which will help him to break through the difficult pass, such as freeing slaves and feeding the hungry, such as orphans and those in need?

## Commentary

*{And then being among those who believed}* that is, in addition to doing these righteous deeds, he should also believe in what he is obliged to believe in.

*{and advised one another to patience}* that is, they urged one another to be patient:

1. **In obeying Allah.**
2. **In refraining from disobeying Allah.**
3. **In accepting the decree of Allah when it is difficult.**

*{and advised one another to compassion}* that is, to show compassion to people by giving to the needy, teaching those who are ignorant, sponsoring orphans and doing what people need.

*{Those are the companions of the right (ashaab al-maymanah)}* that is, those on the right hand side. The word maymanah comes from the phrase yamanahu Allah, which means Allah blessed him. What is meant is those who will be given their books in their right hands on the Day of Resurrection.

**Yemen is so called** because it is to the right (yamin) of one who stands facing the Kaaba. It is described as maymun (blessed) because of the abundance of blessings in that land.

*{But they who disbelieved in Our signs - those are the companions of the left (ashaab al-mash'amah)}* that is, those who denied Our signs are the people of the left-hand side and of bad fortune.

The Arabs used to regard the left-hand side as inauspicious, but Islam declared that notion to be false, as the Prophet ﷺ said: **«O Allah, bless for us our Sham and our Yemen.»** Narrated by al-Bukhari. In other words, bless ash-Sham (Greater Syria), which is on the left-hand side (shimal), and Yemen, which is on the right hand side (yamin).

*{Over them will be fire closed in}* that is, blocking them in and closed over them.

## What we learn from the verses:

1

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ said: *{And then being among those who believed}*; He did not say: "and then being a believer," because describing him as being among those who believed is more indicative of having strong faith than describing him as being a believer. That is because being included in a group is suggestive of stronger faith, because there are many who are described as such, and when there is more of something that is good, that is better.

2

Allah has singled out for mention, among the characteristics of the believers, their advising one another to be patient and advising one another to show compassion, because these are the noblest of their characteristics after faith.

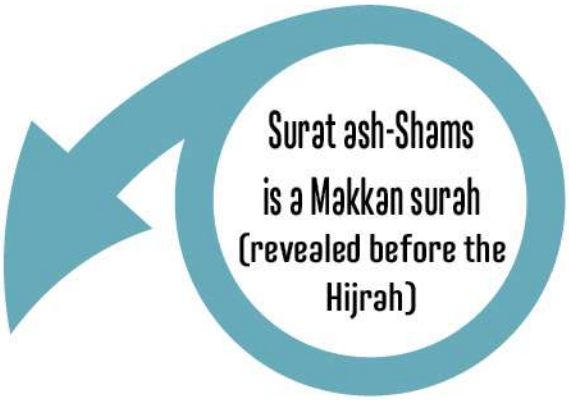
**Patience is** the most essential component of all righteous deeds, because no righteous deed is ever free of restraining one's inclinations and desires, and that is part of patience.

**Compassion is** the most essential quality for the well-being of the Muslims as a community, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{merciful among themselves}* [al-Fath 48:29].

## Activities

1. **List all the qualities of the believers that are mentioned in this surah.**
2. **Try to work out why freeing slaves, and feeding the needy and orphans at times of extreme hunger, are called al-aqabah (the difficult pass).**
3. **Speak about mutual support in the Muslim community in the light of these verses.**

# UNIT 8




﴿وَٱلشَّمۡسِ وَضُحَىٰهَا ۝١ وَٱلۡقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَىٰهَا ۝٢ وَٱلنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّىٰهَا ۝٣
وَٱلَّيۡلِ إِذَا يَغۡشَىٰهَا ۝٤ وَٱلسَّمَآءِ وَمَا بَنَىٰهَا ۝٥ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَمَا طَحَىٰهَا
۝٦ وَنَفۡسٖ وَمَا سَوَّىٰهَا ۝٧ فَأَلۡهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقۡوَىٰهَا ۝٨ قَدۡ أَفۡلَحَ
مَن زَكَّىٰهَا ۝٩ وَقَدۡ خَابَ مَن دَسَّىٰهَا ۝١٠﴾

**Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:** *{By the sun and its brightness and [by] the moon when it follows it and [by] the day when it displays it and [by] the night when it covers it and [by] the sky and He who constructed it and [by] the earth and He who spread it and [by] the soul and He Who proportioned it and inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness, he has succeeded who purifies it and he has failed who instills it [with corruption]}* [ash-Shams 91:1-10].

## Commentary

*{By the sun and its brightness}* – here Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ swears an oath by the sun and its brightness and light, because of what there is in that of immense signs that highlight the perfect might of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and His perfect knowledge and mercy.

*{And [by] the moon when it follows it}* that is, when it follows it in its course and light.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ swears by the sun, because it is the sign of the day, and He swears by the moon, because it is the sign of the night.

## Commentary

*{And [by] the day when it displays it}* that is, when it manifests it. The pronoun in the phrase *{displays it}* may refer to the sun, or it may refer to the earth.

*{And [by] the night when it covers it}* that is, when it covers the sun or the earth until they are in darkness.

*{And [by] the sky and He who constructed it}* that is, and by the sky and its construction, which is very precise and well done.

*{And [by] the earth and He who spread it}* that is, by the earth, which has been spread out until it became suitable for all creatures, so that it meets their needs. This is like the verses in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And after that He spread the earth He extracted from it its water and its pasture}* [an-Nazi'aat 79:30-31].

*{And [by] the soul and He Who proportioned it}* that is, He created it in proper proportion and made its faculties and limbs in perfect order. This is like the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{He said, "Our Lord is He Who gave each thing its form and then guided [it]"}* [Ta-Ha 20:50].

This oath is general in meaning and includes all the souls whom Allah has created, both jinn and humans.

*{And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness}* that is, He inspired these souls to discern wickedness and righteousness, the wickedness of disobedience to Allah and the righteousness of obedience to Him.

*{He has succeeded who purifies it [zakkaahaa]}* that is, he has attained the goal and been saved from what he dreads who purifies his soul by ridding it of shirk and the dross of sin, so that it remains pure and clean.

*{And he has failed who instills it [with corruption]}* that is, that soul has failed and lost whose owner led it astray and led it in the path of sin and doom.

So he will succeed who purifies his soul by obeying Allah and doing righteous deeds, and he will fail who instills his soul with sins.

## What we learn from the verses:

1

We learn about the greatness of these created things by which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ swears, namely the sun and moon, the sky and the earth, the night and the day. This is repeated often in the Noble Book.

2

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ mentions the soul in this context and swears by it, because it is a great and amazing sign of His. It is extremely gentle, sensitive and light, and is easily influenced and quick to react; it quickly moves through different emotions such as distress, want, aims, love and hate. Were it not for the soul, the physical body would be a mere image with no benefits.

3

### Tazkiyat an-nafs may have two meanings:

**The first** meaning is purification of the soul, which is praiseworthy; it means disciplining and training the soul, and ridding it of shirk and sin. **The second** meaning is praising oneself, which is blameworthy; it means talking about oneself and highlighting one's good qualities. This is what is referred to in the verse: *{So do not claim yourselves to be pure (fa laa tuzakku anfusakum)}* [an-Najm 53:32].

4

In these four verses – *{And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it and inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness, he has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instills it [with corruption]}* [ash-Shams 91:7-10] – in addition to the verses *{And have shown him the two ways}* [al-Balad 90:10] and *{Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful}* [al-Insan 76:3], there is an explanation of a very important truth about man, which is that he has equal potential to be good or evil, to be guided or misguided, and that he is able to distinguish between what is good and what is evil, as well as being able to direct himself to do good or to do evil.

## Activities

1. **What is the meaning of the following words:**

a. *{it displays it}* .....

b. *{[He] spread it}* .....

c. *{[he] who instills it [with corruption]}*? .....

2. **How do you reconcile between the verse** *{He has succeeded who purifies it (Qad aflaha man zakkaahaa)}* **and the verse** *{So do not claim yourselves to be pure (Fa laa tuzakku anfusakum)}* [an-Najm 53:32]?

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﴿كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَىٰهَآ ﴿١١﴾ إِذِ ٱنۢبَعَثَ أَشْقَىٰهَا ﴿١٢﴾ فَقَالَ
لَهُمْ رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ نَاقَةَ ٱللَّهِ وَسُقْيَٰهَا ﴿١٣﴾ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا
فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُم بِذَنۢبِهِمْ فَسَوَّىٰهَا ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَا يَخَافُ
عُقْبَٰهَا ﴿١٥﴾﴾

**Allah** عَزَّوَجَلَّ **says:** *{Thamood rejected [their prophet] by reason of their transgression, when the most wretched of them went forth. And the messenger of Allah said to them, «[Do not harm] the she-camel of Allah or [prevent her from] her drink.» But they disbelieved him and hamstrung her. So their Lord brought down upon them destruction for their sin and made it equal [upon all of them]. And He does not fear the consequence thereof}* [ash-Shams 91:11-15].

## Commentary

*{Thamood rejected [their prophet] by reason of their transgression}*. Thamud is the name of the tribe; their Prophet was Salih عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and their land was in al-Hijr. They disbelieved in Prophet Salih عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, who called them to worship Allah Alone, with no partner or associate, which is the call of Tawhid, the call of all the prophets.

*{Thamood rejected [their prophet] by reason of their transgression}* that is, this tribe, because of their transgression and tyranny, rejected their prophet, Salih عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

*{When the most wretched of them went forth}*. This is a description of the transgression mentioned in the previous verse. The most wretched of this town rushed out, wanting to put an end to the she-camel, which Allah had made a sign for Salih عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ of his prophethood.

**The name of this wretched man was Qudar ibn Salif.** In as-Sahihayn it is narrated that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said concerning the verse *{When the most wretched of them was sent forth}*: **«The man who took on this mission was a man of position and power, because of his tribe, like Abu Zam'ah.»**

## Commentary

Abu Zam'ah was the paternal uncle of az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. He was one of those who mocked Islam, and he died as a disbeliever in Makkah.

*{And the messenger of Allah said to them, "[Do not harm] the she-camel of Allah or [prevent her from] her drink"}* – that is, do not hamstring the she-camel of Allah, which He has made a great sign for you; do not harm her and do not prevent her from drinking on her day. A day had been allocated for her and a day for them, as Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says elsewhere: *{This is a she-camel. For her is a [time of] drink, and for you is a [time of] drink, [each] on a known day}* [ash-Shu'ara 26:155].

*{But they denied him and hamstrung her}*. So the outcome was the opposite; they denied that he was a messenger from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, and they hamstrung the she-camel and killed her.

*{So their Lord brought down upon them destruction}* – the word translated here as **destruction** refers to destruction by eradication. In other words, He destroyed them utterly, sending upon them the blast from above them and the earthquake from beneath them.

*{for their sin}* that is, because of their sins, for Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ does not wrong people at all; rather people wrong themselves.

*{and made it equal [upon all of them]}* that is, He destroyed them all, until not one of them was left.

*{And He does not fear the consequence thereof}* that is, Allah does not fear any consequences from those whom He punishes, for all sovereignty belongs to Him and all things are in His Hand.

## What we learn from the verses:

1

Sins are the cause of destruction, doom and corruption. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]}* [ar-Rum 30:41].

And Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{Why [is it that] when a [single] disaster struck you [on the day of Uhud], although you had struck [the enemy in the battle of Badr] with one twice as great, you said, "From where is this?" Say, "It is from yourselves"}* [Aal Imran 3:165].

Thus a person may be stricken by calamity because of something that he himself has done.

2

**Mention of things in conjunction with Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is of two types:**

**The first type** is when an attribute is mentioned in conjunction with Him, such as the Hand of Allah, the Countenance of Allah, the Eye of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. In this case, it is ascribing the attribute to the one to whom it belongs.

**The second type** is by way of showing possession and by way of honouring, such as the House of Allah and the she-camel of Allah.

3

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has power over His creation, and His punishment is painful and severe. *{So their Lord brought down upon them destruction}*. He gives respite to the wrongdoer until, when He seizes him, He will not let him off, for He is the Sovereign Who does not fear the consequences of that from anyone: *{And He does not fear the consequence thereof}*.

## Activities

1. **Summarize the story of Thamud, as narrated in this surah.**

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2. **Mention three things that we learn from this Quranic passage.**

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# UNIT 9

Surat al-Layl is a Makkan surah (revealed before the Hijrah)

﴿وَٱلَّيۡلِ إِذَا يَغۡشَىٰ ١ وَٱلنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّىٰ ٢ وَمَا خَلَقَ ٱلذَّكَرَ وَٱلۡأُنثَىٰٓ ٣
إِنَّ سَعۡيَكُمۡ لَشَتَّىٰ ٤ فَأَمَّا مَنۡ أَعۡطَىٰ وَٱتَّقَىٰ ٥ وَصَدَّقَ بِٱلۡحُسۡنَىٰ ٦
فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُۥ لِلۡيُسۡرَىٰ ٧ وَأَمَّا مَنۢ بَخِلَ وَٱسۡتَغۡنَىٰ ٨ وَكَذَّبَ بِٱلۡحُسۡنَىٰ
٩ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُۥ لِلۡعُسۡرَىٰ ١٠ وَمَا يُغۡنِي عَنۡهُ مَالُهُۥٓ إِذَا تَرَدَّىٰٓ ١١﴾

**Allah** عَزَّوَجَلَّ **says:** *{By the night when it covers and [by] the day when it appears and [by] He Who created the male and female, indeed, your efforts are diverse.As for he who gives and fears Allah and believes in the best [reward], We will make easy for him the path of salvation but as for he who withholds and considers himself free of need and denies the best [reward], We will make easy for him the path of perdition and what will his wealth avail him when he falls?}* [al-Layl 92:1-11].

## Commentary

*{By the night when it covers}* that is, when it covers creation with its darkness.

*{And [by] the day when it appears}* that is, it appears with its light.

*{And [by] He Who created the male and female}* – here Allah swears by Himself, Who created male and female.

## Commentary

*{Indeed, your efforts are diverse}* that is, your deeds and actions vary; some do good and some do evil; some strive for the Hereafter and some strive for worldly gain.

*{As for he who gives and fears Allah}* that is, he gives what he has been commanded to give and fears Allah in all his affairs.

*{And believes in the best [reward]}* that is, he believes in the reward on the Day of Resurrection, and sincerely affirms the oneness of Allah (Tawhid), and believes in the words of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

*{We will make easy for him the path of salvation}* that is, Allah will make it easy for him to follow the path of salvation in all his affairs, both his religious and worldly affairs. Hence you will find that the people for whom it is easiest to strive and do righteous deeds are those who are most mindful of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

*{But as for he who withholds and considers himself free of need}* so he does not give what he has been commanded to give, and he feels that he has no need of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

*{And denies the best [reward]}* that is, he denies the reward in the Hereafter and everything noted above.

*{We will make easy for him the path of perdition}* that is, the path of evil and of troubles. So evil will be made easy for him wherever he is, as Allah says elsewhere: *{And We will turn away their hearts and their eyes just as they refused to believe in it the first time. And We will leave them in their transgression, wandering blindly}* [al-An'am 6:110].

One of the early generations (as-salaf) said: Part of the reward for a good deed is further good deeds, and part of the punishment for bad deeds is further bad deeds.

*{And what will his wealth avail him when he falls?}* That is, his wealth that he withheld and considered himself free of need because of it will not avail him anything when he dies, for nothing will accompany a person (in his grave) except his righteous deeds.

## What we learn from the verses:

1. The more a person fears Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and is mindful of Him, the easier his affairs will be made for him. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: *{And whoever fears Allah, He will make matters easy for him}* [at-Talaq 65:4].

   The further away a person is from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, the harder his affairs will be made for him.

2. The masses of humanity in every time and place fall into two categories only, no matter how much they vary in their types and colours. Every human being does what he himself chooses, then Allah makes his path easy for him, either to salvation or to perdition.

## Activities

1. **Using books of tafsir, explain why Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ starts by mentioning night and day, male and female, when swearing an oath to attest to the fact that people's deeds vary.**

   .....

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2. **What are the hadiths of the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ that are connected to the passage quoted above? Use other sources.**

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﴿إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ وَإِنَّ لَنَا لَلْآخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَىٰ ۝ فَأَنذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّىٰ
﴿١٤﴾ لَا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى ﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ﴿١٦﴾ وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا
الْأَتْقَى ﴿١٧﴾ الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّىٰ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِندَهُ مِن نِّعْمَةٍ
تُجْزَىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَىٰ ﴿٢١﴾﴾

**Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says:** *{Indeed, [incumbent] upon Us is guidance and indeed, to Us belongs the Hereafter and the first [life]. So I have warned you of a Fire which is blazing. None will [enter to] burn therein except the most wretched one who had denied and turned away. But the righteous one will avoid it – [He] who gives [from] his wealth to purify himself and owing no one any favour for which he should repay him, but only seeking the Countenance of his Lord, Most High. And he is going to be satisfied}* [al-Layl 92:12-21].

## Commentary

*{Indeed, [incumbent] upon Us is guidance}*. This is a promise from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ to show the path of guidance to mankind and divert them from the path of misguidance. So He will explain to them what is permissible (halal) and what is forbidden (haram), and other rulings.

*{And indeed, to Us belongs the Hereafter and the first [life]}*. This is connected to the previous sentence, by way of alerting people to the fact that Allah's promise to show His slaves the path of guidance is a favour from Him; otherwise the Hereafter belongs to Him, as does the first life.

*{So I have warned you of a Fire which is blazing}* that is, it has been stoked and is flaming and flaring due to its intensity.

Al-Bukhari narrated that an-Numan ibn Basheer رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: I heard the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ say: **«The most lightly punished of the people of Hell on the Day of Resurrection will be a man on the soles of whose feet two coals will be placed, because of which his brains will boil.»**

## Commentary

*{None will [enter to] burn therein except the most wretched one}*. So no one will be burned with its fire except one who is most wretched and doomed; he will enter it and it will encompass him on all sides.

*{Who had denied and turned away}* that is, he rejected the religion in his heart and refused to do righteous deeds.

*{But the righteous one will avoid it}* that is, the righteous one who is mindful of Allah will be kept away from it.

*{[He] who gives [from] his wealth to purify himself}* that is, he spends his wealth in obedience to his Lord, so as to purify himself and his wealth, and what Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has bestowed upon him.

*{and owing no one any favour for which he should repay him}* that is, he does not give wealth in recompense for a previous favour from someone else.

*{But only seeking the Countenance of his Lord, Most High}* that is, but he gives seeking thereby the Countenance of Allah, hoping to reach Paradise.

*{And he is going to be satisfied}*. That is, Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ will make him pleased with what He gives him of abundant reward.

More than one of the commentators stated that these verses were revealed concerning Abu Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, and some of them even stated that there was consensus among the commentators concerning that.

This does not mean that others in addition to Abu Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ may not also be included in this verse, because of its general meaning.

## What we learn from the verses:

1. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has promised to show His slaves the path of guidance, so that people will have no excuse before Him. The human mind on its own cannot find out about guidance, what is halal and haram, and other rulings, except through revelation from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

## What we learn from the verses:

### Guidance is of two types:

**Guidance through divine help.** No one can guide in this sense except Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

**Guidance in the sense of explaining and showing:** this may come from Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ or from people, such as the messengers عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ and scholars.

2

The Hereafter is mentioned before the first life in the verse *{And indeed, to Us belongs the Hereafter and the first [life]}* for two reasons:

**The first reason** is to highlight its significance, because the Hereafter is more important than this world, and because it is in the Hereafter that the sovereignty of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ will be manifested perfectly and clearly, whereas in this world there are presidents, kings, and rulers who possess what Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ has granted to them of sovereignty.

**The second reason** has to do with the wording and structure of the text, as the ends of the verses rhyme throughout the entire surah.

## Activities

1. **With regard to the words *{And he is going to be satisfied}*, many commentators have stated that this verse was revealed about Abu Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Does this rule out the inclusion of anyone else in this verse? Explain.**

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2. **Mention the types of guidance, based on some other sources.**

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# UNIT 10

Surat ad-Duha is a Makkan surah (revealed before the Hijrah)

﴿وَٱلضُّحَىٰ ۝١ وَٱلَّيۡلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ ۝٢ مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ ۝٣
وَلَلۡأٓخِرَةُ خَيۡرٞ لَّكَ مِنَ ٱلۡأُولَىٰ ۝٤ وَلَسَوۡفَ يُعۡطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرۡضَىٰٓ
۝٥ أَلَمۡ يَجِدۡكَ يَتِيمٗا فَـَٔاوَىٰ ۝٦ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَآلّٗا فَهَدَىٰ ۝٧
وَوَجَدَكَ عَآئِلٗا فَأَغۡنَىٰ ۝٨ فَأَمَّا ٱلۡيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقۡهَرۡ ۝٩ وَأَمَّا ٱلسَّآئِلَ
فَلَا تَنۡهَرۡ ۝١٠ وَأَمَّا بِنِعۡمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثۡ ۝١١﴾

**Allah** عَزَّوَجَلَّ **says:** *{By the morning brightness and [by] the night when it covers with darkness, your Lord has not forsaken you, [O Muhammad], nor does He detest [you]. And the Hereafter is better for you than the first [life]. And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied. Did He not find you an orphan and give [you] refuge? And He found you lost and guided [you], and He found you poor and made [you] self-sufficient. So as for the orphan, do not oppress [him]. And as for the beggar, do not repel [him]. But as for the favor of your Lord, proclaim [it]}* [ad-Duha 93:1-11].

## Reason for revelation

Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated that Jundab ibn Abdillah al-Bajali رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: Jibreel was slow in coming back to the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, so the polytheists said: Muhammad has been forsaken. Then Allah revealed the words: *{By the morning brightness and [by] the night when it covers with darkness, your Lord has not forsaken you, [O Muhammad], nor does He detest [you]}*.

## Commentary

*{By the morning brightness}*. Here Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ swears by the morning brightness (ad-Duha), which is the early hours of the day. According to one view, it refers to the entire day.

*{And [by] the night when it covers with darkness}* that is, when it becomes still, and covers everything, coming with its darkness.

*{Your Lord has not forsaken you, [O Muhammad], nor does He detest [you]}* that is, your Lord has not abandoned you, O Muhammad, or neglected you, and He does not hate you.

**The word qala** (translated here as detest) refers to one who resents something or someone. A word from the same root appears in the verse in which Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ says: (*{He said, "Indeed, I am, toward your deed, of those who detest [it] (min al-qaaleen)"}* [ash-Shu'ara 26:168].

*{And the Hereafter is better for you than the first [life]}* that is, the Hereafter, and what Allah has prepared for you in it, is better for you than this world and everything in it, so do not grieve for what you miss out on in this world.

*{And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied}* that is, your Lord will give you, O Muhammad, in the Hereafter from what He has of abundant blessings until you will be pleased, and until He makes you pleased with regard to your ummah.

Then Allah begins to list the blessings that He has bestowed upon him صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

*{Did He not find you an orphan and give [you] refuge?}* That is, He gave you a refuge to go to and a place to settle, because he صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was an orphan, and Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ gave him refuge.

*{And He found you lost and guided [you]}* meaning that he had no knowledge, so Allah guided him to Tawhid (affirmation of His oneness) and prophethood. This verse is like the verse in which Allah says: *{And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command. You did not know what is the Book or [what is] faith}* [ash-Shura 42:52].

*{And He found you poor and made [you] self-sufficient}*. The word aa'il, translated here as poor, comes from the word ayl, which means poverty. The same word is seen in the verse: *{And if you fear privation ('aylah), Allah will enrich you from His bounty}* [at-Tawbah 9:28].

## Commentary

*{So as for the orphan, do not oppress [him]}* that is, do not despise him and look down on him, and do not wrong him by depriving him of his rights. This is in response to the verse *{Did He not find you an orphan and give [you] refuge?}*. In other words, as Allah gave you refuge when you were an orphan, do not oppress the orphan; rather treat him kindly.

*{And as for the beggar, do not repel [him]}* – as for the one in need who asks you for help, do not repel him or speak harshly to him; rather give him food and meet his needs.

*{But as for the favor of your Lord, proclaim [it]}* that is, speak of these immense blessings that have been granted in this world and the Hereafter, of which Allah has reminded you.

These blessings include what is mentioned in this surah, namely being given refuge after having been an orphan, and being guided after having been ignorant, and being made self-sufficient after having been poor. The greatest of these blessings are prophethood, being sent as a messenger and being guided with the Quran.

## What we learn from the verses:

1. In the verse *{And as for the beggar, do not repel [him]}*, the word sa'il (lit. one who asks; translated above as "beggar") includes both one who asks for money and one who asks for knowledge. Hence the teacher is enjoined to be gentle with the learner, honour him and show compassion towards him, for by doing that he will be helping him to attain his goal, and honouring one who is striving to benefit the people and the land.

2. In the verse *{Did He not find you an orphan and give [you] refuge?}*, the last word, fa aawaa (translated here as "and gave [you] refuge") appears as such both because of the meaning and because of the structure and rhyme of the surah.

**With regard to the structure and rhyme,** it is so that it will match the endings of the other verses in the surah.

## What we learn from the verses:

**With regard to the meaning,** it appears without a pronoun (that is, it does not say fa aawaaka (and gave you refuge)), because in that case the refuge would be only for the Prophet ﷺ. But the matter is more broad than that, for Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ gave refuge to him, so by means of him, He gave refuge to the believers and supported and helped them and, moreover, He عَزَّوَجَلَّ defended them.

## Activities

1. **What was the reason for the revelation of Surat ad-Duha?**

.....

2. **Explain the meaning of the following words:**

a. *{(nor has He detested [you])}* .....

b. *{(it covers with darkness)}* .....

c. *{(poor)}* .....

3. **We may note that in the Quran, Allah often swears by various times. What does that mean?**

.....

4. **Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ chose an orphan to be His Prophet. Think about that, and try to work out the benefits of the fact that the Prophet ﷺ grew up as an orphan.**

.....

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**And Allah is the Source of strength.**

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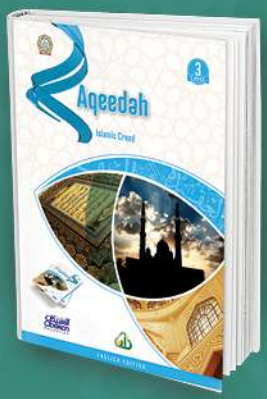

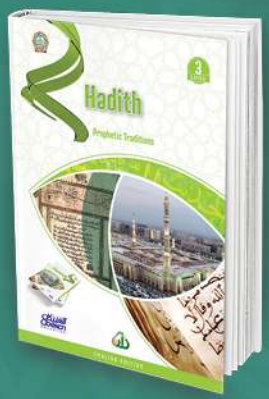

Distribution العبيكان
KSA - Riyadh
King Fahd Road, Al-Olayia
Tel: +966 11 4808654, Fax: +966 11 4808095
P.o. Box: 67622 Riyadh 11517
www.obeikanretail.com

Publishing ZAD GROUP
KSA - Jeddah
Al-Shatei, Beutat Business - Office. 16
Mob: +966 50 444 6432, Tel: +966 12 6929242
P.o. Box: 126371 Jeddah 21352
www.zadgroup.net

ISBN: 9786038234600
9 786038 234600